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BRYAN'S INFLUENCE ON
WILSON'S NOMINATION
IN 1912

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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LIFE

Henry Joseph Bourguignon, S. J. was born in Lakewood, Ohio, August 19, 1931.

He was graduated from St. Ignatius High School, Cleveland, Ohio, June, 1949, and in August of the same year he entered the Society of Jesus at Milford Novitiate, Milford, Ohio. He was enrolled in Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, in September, 1949.

In August, 1953, he transferred to West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Indiana, where he studied philosophy for three years. In September, 1953, he was enrolled in Loyola University, Chicago, from which university he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in June, 1954. During the same month he was enrolled in the graduate school of Loyola University.

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CHAPTER I

THE POLITICAL SCENE--JUNE, 1912

History, as biology, knows no spontaneous generation; hence the present is meaningless without the past. The Democratic National Convention of 1912 was no exception. This seven-day convention at Baltimore witnessed colorful banners and dramatic speeches, heated accusations, wild threats, and fierce retorts, deft sparring and clumsy cudgeling. There were the dark-cloaked villains and the crusading heroes. But every instant of the Baltimore convention grew out of its times, and only as a child of its age is it meaningful. Progressivism was the spirit of the age, that progressivism which, in turn, had sprung from Populism, Socialism, and the muckrakers. Besides the general political mood of progressivism, however, two special factors shaped the Baltimore convention; the Republican convention, which had just finished when the Democrats convened, and the attitude of William Jennings Bryan toward the various Democratic candidates.

THE RISE OF PROGRESSIVE POLITICS

The decades before 1912 were a period of change, a time of ferment with newness and expectation in the air. Buildings were higher and business was bigger. There were new styles and new machines, new dances, new energy, new words, and new wealth. More and more people drove automobiles, with close to

half a million of Ford's "tin Lizzies" on the road. The tempo of the times was cleverly expressed in Life: "This is a get-things-done-quick age. It is a ready-to-put-on-and-wear-home age, a just-add-hot-water-and-serve age, a new-speed-record-every-day age, a take-it-or-leave-it-I'm-very-busy age."¹

Strangely enough, people felt assured that all this change meant progress. All they needed was to undo and re-do all that earlier ages had so bunglingly accomplished. Mr. Dooley, commenting on new machinery, portrays the tone of that day, as well as its fallacy:

'Yes, sir, mechanical science has made gr-reat sthrides.

.....
'What's it done f'r th' wurruld? says ye. It's done ivry-thing. It's give us fast ships an' an autymatic hist f'r th' hod, an' small flats an' a taste iv solder in th' peaches. If annybody says th' wurruld ain't betther off thin it was, tell him that a masheen has been invinted that makes honey out iv pethrolyum. If he asts ye why they ain't anny Shakesperes today, say: 'No, but we no longer make sausages be hand.'

'Tis pro-gress. We live in a cinchry iv pro-gress an' I thank th' Lord I've seen most iv it.

.....
'I've been up to th' top iv th' very highest buildin' in town, Hinnissy, an' I wasn't anny nearer Hivin thin if I was in th' sthreet. Th' stars was as far away as iver. An' down beneath is a lot iv us runnin' an' lapin' an' jumpin' about, pushin' each other over, haulin' little sthrips iv ir'n to pile up in little buildin's that ar-re called sky-scrapers but not be th' sky; wurrukin' night an' day to make a masheen that'll carry us fr'm wan jack-rabbit colony to another an' yellin', 'Pro-gress!' Pro-gress, oho! I can see th' stars winkin' at each other an' sayin': 'Ain't they funny! Don't they think they're playin' hell!''²

Discontent with the past and a confident hope in the future were characteristic of this age of progress. As the people grew more aware of their

¹Cited in Mark Sullivan, Our Times (New York, 1932), IV, 288.

²Peter Finley Dunne, Observations by Mr. Dooley (New York, 1906), pp. 214-218

rapid material advance, they realized the incongruity of the social and political backwardness of the day.

Demand for reform grew from a faint echo in the West to a nationwide, thundering roar. Various streams of discontent joined to seek this new and better world through political reforms. One stream was Populism, that Mid-western movement of the nineties protesting the monopolies of the East coast. Bryan was the voice of Populism. The muckrakers were another element. They awakened the people to the conditions in their cities, thus bringing the urban population to join in the demand for reform. A third factor was Socialism which acquainted many with the need for reform and reconciled them to the idea of government intervention. These three streams of thought flowed more or less into that deeper and broader stream, called after 1905, progressivism. By 1912 progressivism had gained such momentum that it could no longer be held in check.

Populism was born on the farm. Hard times had driven the Western and Southern farmers to enter politics. The Granger party and the Greenback party gave birth to the Farmers' Alliance. In 1890 this agrarian third party tasted several striking victories. This was the signal for more concerted efforts, and thus the Populist party was created in 1892. The Populists opposed the monopolies in banking and transportation. The government, they held, should step in to control these trusts which were responsible for the hard times. The Populists demanded more money, both paper and silver, a graduated income tax, government operation of railroads, direct election of senators and such extensions of direct democracy as the initiative and referendum.³

³Populism is treated in Russel B. Nye, Midwestern Progressive Politics (East Lansing, Mich., 1951), pp. 60-78 and in Eric F. Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny (New York, 1952). pp. 43-62

The spirit of Populism, in the person of William Jennings Bryan, captured the Democratic presidential nomination in 1896. Bryan had fought his way to the nomination armed mainly with a rare gift of oratory. As a spellbinder he was unsurpassed in his day. He had gained the national limelight by his powerful speeches during his two terms in Congress. Although he stood on a platform demanding most of the reforms which the Populists favored, Bryan fought the campaign of 1896 largely on the plank of free-silver. This inflationary plank appealed to the farmers of the West and South, but the laborers in the cities could not be convinced that inflation would solve their problems. Bryan carried the Southern and most of the Western states, but he lost the key states north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi, where he had done most of his campaigning. Industrializing America would have nothing to do with a reform movement identified with agrarian radicalism.⁴

After his defeat in 1896 Bryan kept control of the Democratic party until he was again defeated in 1900. The Eastern conservative wing of the party then took the reins from the Westerners and led the party to a worse defeat in 1904 with Alton B. Parker as its candidate. Bryan recaptured the Democratic party after its defeat in 1904 and was nominated in 1908 for a third time.⁵ Once again the Democrats were defeated but even after his defeat Bryan remained the most influential man in his party. This powerful position enabled him to be a key factor in the convention at Baltimore in 1912.

⁴J. A. Barnes, "Myths of the Bryan Campaign," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXIV (Dec. 1947), 367-404.

⁵Paxton Hibben, The Peerless Leader (New York, 1929), pp. 221-229, 246-258, 280-288.

The Populist party had put all its chips on Bryan in 1896 and had lost. After that defeat the party fell apart, many Westerners remaining faithful to Bryan, while others attempted to revive the Populist party, with little or no success. Though Populism itself was dead, its spirit of protest lived on and united with the progressive movement after the turn of the century.⁶

A second influence which helped to shape the progressive movement was the muckrakers. Long before Theodore Roosevelt had coined the epithet, authors had been portraying social and economic evils, opening the eyes of many Americans. Henry George's Progress and Poverty, 1879, and Edward Bellamy's novel Looking Backward, 1888, described the poverty, misery, and economic inequality so strangely out of place in an age of material progress and plenty. The solutions they offered were radical, but the situation they described was a true-to-life picture of a profound problem which stared America squarely in the face. Henry Demarest Lloyd exploded a bombshell in 1894 when he published Wealth against Commonwealth. Here was a complete, careful, and detailed study of trusts, one of the most damning indictments of monopoly ever written.⁷ People were beginning to realize that something would have to be done to save the country from falling into the hands of the bankers. Shocking municipal corruption was revealed in Lincoln Steffens' articles, The Shame of the Cities, published in 1902. Ida Tarbell's careful research led to an expose of a giant trust in the History of the Standard Oil Company. Many other articles and books were to follow giving needed publicity to the reform

⁶ Nye, pp. 120-126.

⁷ Ibid., 96-102.

movement. The middle class city laborers who were not attracted by the Populists read these muckraking classics and joined their voices to the already loud chorus crying for a change.⁸

The early attempts of Socialists to gain a following among the workingmen were largely unsuccessful because the party was dominated by Europeans. Not until 1898 when Eugene V. Debs from Indiana took control of a moderate wing did the Socialists win the acceptance of American laborers. No longer was Socialism tainted with a foreign ideology. By 1912 Debs had so increased the strength of the party that he could poll nine hundred thousand votes while running against three major candidates, all of whom claimed to favor reform. The Socialists helped the progressive movement by awakening laborers to social conditions and by teaching them that the government should intervene in economic life to foster social justice.⁹

Socialism, Populism, and the muckrakers melted and blended together to form the progressive movement. Many of the basic tenets of Populism were held by the progressives. There was the same faith in the popular majority and the same determination to extend the sphere of governmental activity in order to control monopoly and to promote and protect public welfare, a tendency which appealed to many who were unwilling to go as far as Socialism. Progressivism aimed at restoring opportunity, regarding the trust as the root of many glaring evils. The big difference between Populism and progressivism lay in the fact that the former was largely an agrarian revolt, while the latter was basically

⁸Goldman, pp. 171-176.

⁹Ibid. 73, and Nye, pp. 174-179.

urban. Reform, thanks in part to the muckrakers and to the Socialists, had become an urban movement. The Populists seemed to question whether any businessman could be a decent citizen. Progressivism was enthusiastically in favor of the business world and intended merely to correct abuses.¹⁰

People at the turn of the century saw a new world ahead, made possible by progress in industry and technology. As they became aware of the corruption in politics, the extent and power of the trusts, and the inequality in social and economic life, they increased their demands for reform. The marvelous material progress which had bettered living conditions in many ways made the people think that their social life also could be bettered by applying the same American ingenuity to the reform of business and politics.

Reforms were attempted in the cities and the states, and finally on the national level. Toledo and Cleveland elected mayors who crusaded successfully against the graft and wide-spread corruption in their cities, while other cities also tried to put their houses in order. State reforms were inaugurated by progressive governors such as Robert LaFollette in Wisconsin, William U'Ren in Oregon, Hiram Johnson in California, Theodore Roosevelt and Charles Evans Hughes in New York, and Woodrow Wilson in New Jersey.

In national politics the conservative interests of the bankers received a severe blow when in 1901 Mark Hanna's protege, President McKinley, was shot. Teddy Roosevelt, the hero of San Juan Hill, became president. "I told William McKinley it was a mistake to nominate that wild man at Philadelphia," growled Hanna when he heard of McKinley's death. "I asked him if he realized what would happen if he should die. Now look, that damned cowboy is President of

¹⁰Ibid 196-202, and Goldman, pp. 75-84.

the United States!"¹¹

During his two terms in the White House Roosevelt probably did more for progressivism than any other man. His vibrant personality and his rare ability to create a striking phrase and to keep himself in the public eye popularized the reform movement. The reforms he actually accomplished are negligible when compared with the publicity he gave to the movement. Under his dynamic leadership the country moved in the general direction of more government interference to check exploitation by large-scale capital, thus bolstering the bargaining power of lower-income groups.¹² Thanks to colorful Teddy Roosevelt, America was becoming reform-conscious.

In 1908 Roosevelt gave William Howard Taft his blessing and his office and set out for Africa. Taft's quiet, legalistic personality contrasted sharply with his predecessor's vigorous approach. Bad luck hounded Taft's every step. His efforts at reform lacked publicity while the defeats suffered by the progressives were laid at his door with a loud cry of "conservative." Although Taft accomplished more reforms than Roosevelt, he was commonly regarded as an opponent of progress. The 1910 elections gave the Democrats a majority in the House and the Republican majority in the Senate was greatly reduced.¹³ The voters seemed dissatisfied with Taft's leadership. The coming election in 1912 would be a golden opportunity for the Democrats finally to elect a president.

Progressivism, therefore, at the crest of its power, forms the general

¹¹Quoted in Ibid. 161.

¹²Ibid. 163-165, and Nye, pp. 250-251.

¹³Ibid. 260-271.

background for the Democratic convention of 1912. Two particular factors also were destined to influence this Baltimore convention.

THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

Mr. Dooley predicted accurately the type of convention the Republicans would have:

'Am I goin' to th' convintion?' said Mr. Dooley. 'What a question to ask a spoortin' charakter! If a fellow was to come to ye an' say: 'Here's a free ticket f'r a combynation iv th' Chicago fire, Saint Batholomew's massacres, the battle iv th' Boyne, th' life iv Jesse James, an' th' night iv th' big wind,' wud ye take it or wud ye not? . . . Iv coorse I'm goin'! I haven't missed a riot in this neighborhood in forty years . . . I'll get a seat somewhere that I can see th' sthruggle f'r human rights goin' on but fur enough away so I won't be splashed.'¹⁴

In the primaries that year the two wings of the Republican party fought bitterly for party control. After Roosevelt threw his hat in the ring he led the progressives with a following largely of Midwestern insurgents. Taft led the conservative forces of the East. Taft-men controlled the Republican National Committee, whose job it was to make preparations for the convention. Thus it was that a Taft supporter called the convention to order, June 18, and that seventy-two Taft delegates were awarded a place on the temporary roll while seventy-two Roosevelt delegates were made to contest these places. What seemed even more unjust to Roosevelt and his followers, these seventy-two Taft delegates were permitted to vote when the temporary chairman was elected and when the contest in the various states took place for the seventy-two disputed seats. These seventy-two votes held the balance of power in the convention. By voting on each other's cases the Taft delegates seated themselves, assuring Taft of

¹⁴Quoted in Sullivan, IV, 512.

a majority in all the further proceedings. Roosevelt's forces were not silent while their seventy-two delegates were, one by one, refused seats. Cries of "thief, robber; what a pack of thieves," greeted each decision unfavorable to Roosevelt. But the chairman overrode all protests and ignored objections. With these delegates seated Taft had little trouble winning the nomination. Roosevelt led his followers as they walked out threatening to form a new party.¹⁵

The fact that the wild Republican convention took place just a week before the Democrats would open their convention, increases its significance. All the Democrats had their eyes on the proceedings, but especially William Jennings Bryan, who sat among the newspaper correspondents at the Chicago convention, watching the Republicans at each other's throats. The lesson of a convention controlled by a reactionary national committee was not lost on him.¹⁶

BRYAN AND THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES

Chief among the Democratic candidates were Governor Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey and Speaker Champ Clark of Missouri. Bryan after his third defeat had announced that he would not be a candidate in 1912.¹⁷

¹⁵Ibid. 512-532

¹⁶Bryan later wrote that the most prominent evil at the Republican convention was "the organization of a new convention by an old, outgrown committee."--William Jennings Bryan, A Tale of Two Conventions, (New York, 1912), p. xxi. Cf. also Ibid. 32-39, 71, and 84, and Ray Stannard Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters (Garden City, New York, 1927-1939), III, 333.

¹⁷William Jennings Bryan and Mary Baird Bryan, The Memoirs of William Jennings Bryan (Chicago, 1925), 158. The knotty problem whether Bryan really wanted the nomination, seeking to eliminate both Clark and Wilson by his neutrality, will be discussed in a later chapter.

Woodrow Wilson learned his politics from the theoretical side as a careful student and professor of history and government. As president of Princeton he learned something of executive techniques. From the comparative quiet of the university he threw himself into the hard realities of a politician's life. In 1910 he ran for governor of New Jersey and was elected after a hard fight in which his sincerity and his stirring, well-phrased speeches won him many votes. The most amazing point in Wilson's rise to public office was his shift from the extreme right wing to the left wing of the Democratic party. In 1907, while still very conservative, Wilson had written in a private letter, "Would that we could do something at once dignified and effective to knock Mr. Bryan once for all into a cocked hat."¹⁸ This sentence proved extremely embarrassing to the converted Wilson, posing as a leader of the progressives. When Wilson started his campaign for the Democratic nomination in 1912, this private letter was published in an attempt to destroy his chances for nomination. Bryan still controlled the progressive wing of the party and his opposition would probably eliminate any progressive seeking nomination. The Nebraskan, however, was too big a man and too shrewd a politician to let an ill-considered remark made years before cause Wilson's defeat. Bryan was deeply impressed by the splendid record as a progressive Wilson had made during his two years as governor.¹⁹ There is every reason to believe that by the end of 1911 Bryan regarded Wilson as a sincere and reliable reformer, entirely acceptable as a Democratic

¹⁸Woodrow Wilson to Adrian F. Joline, April 4, 1907, cited in Arthur S. Link, Wilson, the Road to the White House (Princeton, 1947), pp. 352-353. Wilson's conversion is treated, Ibid. 122-124.

¹⁹Ibid. 354-357.

presidential nominee.²⁰

Champ Clark of Missouri, the leading candidate at the opening of the Baltimore convention, was a perennial member of the House of Representatives, being absent from that body only for two years between 1892 and his death in 1921. For several years he was the Democratic minority leader, and after the sweeping Democratic victory of 1910 was chosen speaker. He consistently supported Bryan²¹ and was regarded by Bryan as progressive enough to run for the presidency. Perhaps Bryan thought Clark lacked some of the aggressive traits he would have liked to see in a leader of the party;²² he seems, however, never to have doubted Clark's progressiveness.

During the pre-convention campaign both Clark and Wilson sought Bryan's endorsement. Both were disappointed, for Bryan consistently approved of both and refused to choose between them. He stated that he regarded either candidate as progressive and entirely acceptable to him. He let them know that he would favor Clark in any state where Clark was stronger and Wilson in the states where he was stronger, his one desire, Bryan insisted, being to ensure progressive control of the Baltimore convention. Rather than have a struggle between Wilson and Clark in the primaries result in the election of conservative delegates, Bryan said he would back the more popular of the two progressives in

²⁰Bryan, Memoirs, 160; Commoner (Lincoln, Neb.), Feb. 16, 1912, p.2; William G. McAdoo, Crowded Years (Boston, 1951), pp. 134-136.

²¹Link, pp. 398-399.

²²Baker, Wilson, Life and Letters, III, 324-325 where two letters of Bryan are cited, one to an opponent of Clark, praising Clark's progressive record, and the other to Clark himself, commending Wilson for fighting and telling Clark that a "leader must lead." Cf. also Bryan, Memoirs, 158-159, 335-337 and Hibben, pp. 250-251.

any state. Yet, he insisted both candidates were equally to his liking.²³

Of the other candidates only Oscar Underwood of Alabama and Judson Harmon of Ohio won pre-convention support outside of their own states. Bryan regarded both as reactionaries and opposed their nomination, considering them minions of Wall Street.²⁴ It is important to bear in mind that the Underwood campaign was backed largely by Southern conservatives who opposed the brand of progressivism identified with Bryan and Wilson.²⁵

There were several favorite son candidates whose names were presented at Baltimore. To most of them Bryan seemed indifferent, favoring a better known candidate such as Wilson or Clark.²⁶ But when it seemed during the convention that neither Clark nor Wilson could win the nomination, Bryan suggested several compromise candidates. Senator John W. Kern of Indiana, Bryan's running-mate in 1908, was his personal choice in case of a deadlock.²⁷

When the Baltimore convention opened, therefore, the whole nation, at long last, seemed united in crying for reform. The Democrats had just witnessed the

²³Commoner (Lincoln, Neb.), Jan. 16, p. 2; Feb. 29, p. 1; April 19, p. 1; April 26, p. 3, 1912.

²⁴Ibid. Jan. 19, p. 7; Jan. 26, p. 4, Feb. 2, p. 7; Feb. 9, p. 6; Feb. 16, pp. 3-5; Feb. 23, pp. 5-6; Mar. 8, pp. 2, 7; April 5, p. 3; June 14, p. 2, 1912. Cf. also Arthur S. Link, "The Underwood Presidential Movement of 1912," Journal of Southern History, XI (May 1945), 232-234.

²⁵Ibid. 240-241.

²⁶Bryan, Tale of Convs., 156-157.

²⁷Bryan, statement to the press, June 29, 1912, quoted in Ibid. 178. In this statement he also mentioned Ollie James, James O'Gorman, Charles Culbertson, and Isidor Rayner as acceptable candidates.

Republican party split wide open on this very issue of reform. Could the Democrats take advantage of the split, or would they also be torn asunder? Bryan, still wielding tremendous power in the Democratic party was uncompromising in his demand for a progressive nominee. With all his strength he opposed the conservatives within his party. Such was the political scene when the delegates began converging on Baltimore for their convention which would open on June 25, 1912.

CHAPTER II

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMANSHIP

William Jennings Bryan arrived at Baltimore on Sunday, June 23, 1912, to attend the Democratic National Convention which would open on Tuesday. His train was scheduled to arrive at three-thirty p.m. but the crowd that gathered to welcome him waited till six o'clock that evening before he finally arrived.

He was again greeted by a large crowd in the lobby of the Belvedere Hotel where he set up headquarters. In an interview that evening with nearly a hundred reporters he commented on the battle he was then waging over the temporary chairmanship of the Democratic convention. A few days before, while Bryan was still at the Republican convention, Alton Parker had been nominated by a sub-committee to that office. Bryan made it perfectly clear that Parker's nomination would not pass unchallenged.¹

With just two days before the convention the delegates swarming into town could see clouds gathering on the horizon. The convention was going to open with a storm, and Bryan seemed intent upon providing the lightning.

¹From an Associated Press dispatch, Baltimore, June 23, cited in Commoner, June 28, 1912, p. 2.

In some ways this storm had been brewing since 1896, Bryan's first nomination. The temporary chairman was of minor importance in himself, but Bryan felt sure that more was at stake than just the selection of a man to give the keynote address. His thoughts undoubtedly went back to 1896 when a similar battle was waged.

Although even earlier Bryan had been hampered by a national committee controlled by his opponents, 1896 engraved yet more deeply on his memory the danger of conservative control of the committee. The pro-gold faction controlled the Democratic committee that year and they sought to get control of the nominating convention in order to nominate a conservative for president. They used their power to recommend one of their gold delegates as temporary chairman. Since Bryan and the silver delegates had no intention of accepting their recommendation, which is usually accepted without debate, the silver faction nominated one of their number to oppose the pro-gold candidate for the temporary chairmanship. When the convention elected the pro-silver candidate, the silver faction was assured of control of the convention from the outset. In the same convention the national committee made another move to give the gold faction added strength. Using their prerogative of preparing a temporary roll of delegates, they refused to seat the legally selected, pro-silver delegation from Nebraska, which Bryan headed. The Nebraska seats went to gold delegates, until Bryan fought and won a battle against this injustice.²

²William J. Bryan, *The First Battle* (Chicago, 1896), p. 188; Bryan, *Memoirs*, pp. 107-108. This gives Bryan's version of the 1896 convention. It is given here precisely because it is the version influencing Bryan. For a different view of this convention cf. Barnes, "Myths of the Bryan Campaign," *MVER*, XXXIV, 367-404.

Bryan knew well that if the national committee had its way in choosing a temporary chairman and in seating its own delegates, the nomination might well have gone to a conservative, pro-gold delegate.

In all three of his campaigns for the presidency Bryan met with some opposition on the national committee, which was supposed to back the candidate.³ These opponents got control of the 1904 convention where they were able to nominate Alton Parker in spite of Bryan's protests.⁴ These long years had taught Bryan to be more than a little suspicious of the national committee.

In January, 1912, six months before the Baltimore convention, another incident occurred which confirmed Bryan's fears about the national committee. The committee met in Washington on January 8 to decide where and when the national convention should be held. Their first action was to seat several new committeemen who had been appointed by the state Democratic committees. Among these men were two claiming to have been appointed by the Pennsylvania committee, Colonel James M. Guffey, of unsavory reputation, and A. Mitchell Palmer, a progressive. Bryan led the fight against Guffey, arguing that a man with such questionable connections with "predatory wealth," did not belong on the national committee.⁵ Guffey, however, was seated by a vote of thirty-four to thirteen.⁶

³Bryan, Memoirs, 175.

⁴Ibid. 152.

⁵Commoner, Jan. 19, 1912, p. 3.

⁶The minutes of the committee meeting are given in an appendix to the Official Report of the Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention [of 1912] (Chicago, 1912), pp. 436-449. That Bryan had Guffey on his mind while in Baltimore we know from a statement to the press the day before the convention opened. "When Mr. Guffey was seated," Bryan said, ". . . I learned what I had expected, that a majority of the [national] committee [are reactionaries.]" New York Daily Tribune, June 25, 1912, pt. 1, p. 2.

For Bryan this defeat was a sure sign that reactionaries controlled the Democratic national committee.

If there was any reluctance in Bryan's mind about opposing the national committee it was removed by the Republican convention. Bryan had watched the Roosevelt progressives thwarted at every turn by a smooth running reactionary committee. In the Republican convention the conservative committee had accomplished what the Democratic committee had attempted in 1896, and what Bryan thought they were trying again in 1912. Bryan himself describes what he saw at the Republican convention, and how it influenced him:

At the Chicago convention I saw how unfairly a holdover political machine had made up the temporary roll of the convention and then used the votes of those put upon the roll to seat each other, thus giving the committee control of the new convention.

I was in a good position to watch the roller as it moved noisily along, overcoming every obstruction, and when its work was completed thwarting the will of a large majority of the Republican party.

.....
About the time this outrage on popular government had had time to soak in I came to Baltimore and here I found the Democratic national committee acting upon the same plan, using holdover committeemen to misrepresent the delegations, and intending to open a progressive convention with a reactionary keynote.

I soon learned that the same influences which at Chicago defied popular sentiment in the Republican party were here in force.⁷

These various incidents undoubtedly helped shape Bryan's thinking during his stormy stay in Baltimore. He feared that the conservative wing would so control the organization as to be able to nominate one of their candidates. Even if they could not nominate a candidate, they could perhaps make the

⁷Bryan, Tale of Convs., pp. 187-188. This book is a collection of the newsletters written by Bryan during the two conventions of 1912. The one just quoted was written on June 30, while the Democratic convention was in progress.

nomination impossible without their cooperation, which would cause many voters to suspect some shady dealing. The shadow of Roosevelt also hung ominously over Bryan and the Democrats. If they should nominate a conservative, thought to be controlled by Wall Street, as the Republicans had, Roosevelt would have the necessary issue for a third party crusade.⁸ These were some of the ideas Bryan must have been pondering when considering the fight over the temporary chairmanship. Now to the fight itself.

Since the spring of 1912 Bryan had been trying to clinch the temporary chairmanship for a progressive, thus guaranteeing that the convention would open with a progressive giving the keynote address, and with progressives controlling the organization. Norman Mack, the Democratic national chairman had suggested during the spring that the committee would welcome Bryan to give the keynote. Bryan responded that he doubted the wisdom of accepting the temporary chairmanship. He advised Mack to contact the two leading candidates, Clark and Wilson, to find some keynoter agreeable to both. "I think," Bryan continued, that under the circumstances it is better for me not to take a prominent part in the organization of the convention."⁹ Bryan feared that he would be accused of trying to stampede the convention if he gave the keynote address, for some papers had claimed that his neutrality between Clark and Wilson proved that he really wanted the nomination himself. Thus, lest he seem to dominate the convention, Bryan refused the temporary chairmanship.¹⁰

⁸Ibid. 71, 81, and 84.

⁹Letter of W. J. Bryan to N. E. Mack, May, 1912, cited in part in Link, Wilson, p. 432, n. 3. This statement is more than a little ironical in the light of the part Bryan was to play at Baltimore.

¹⁰Bryan, Memoirs, pp. 160-161.

About the end of May, Bryan again tried to ensure a progressive keynoter. He wrote to Wilson suggesting that since neither he nor Clark seemed to have a majority of the convention, the one with the larger number of delegates should name the temporary chairman. Since Clark seemed sure to have more votes at the start of the convention, Bryan hinted that Wilson should accept Clark's choice for temporary chairman, Ollie James of Kentucky. But as such an admission of Clark's superior strength could have hurt his own chances, Wilson wrote to Bryan agreeing that the temporary chairman should be a progressive, but preferring Senator James A. O'Gorman of New York.¹¹

On June 20 the committee on arrangements, a sub-committee of sixteen men, met at Baltimore. Norman Mack of New York, the national chairman, nominated Judge Parker for the temporary chairmanship. Robert L. Henry of Texas and James O'Gorman of New York were nominated by Wilson supporters, while Ollie James of Kentucky was placed in the contest by a Clark man. Senator Kern of Indiana was also nominated. Parker received eight votes, the other eight being divided among the remaining candidates.¹² Thus the first round went to the reactionaries. But when Thomas Taggart, political boss from Indiana, moved that Parker's nomination be made unanimous, a Wilson delegate objected. Parker's name next would be referred to the full national committee which would meet on June 24, the day before the convention opened. The full committee could either accept Parker and recommend him to the convention, or reject the

¹¹Ibid. 161. Wilson's letter, dated June 6, 1912, is cited, Ibid. 338.

¹²Proceedings of the Convention, p. 473. The vote was Parker 8, James 3, Henry 3, O'Gorman 1 and Kern 1.

recommendation of the sub-committee by offering some other name to the convention.

Bryan was still in Chicago at the Republican convention when he heard the result of the sub-committee meeting. He immediately telegraphed Norman Mack saying, "I have no choice among progressives for temporary chairman, but it would be suicidal to have a reactionary for chairman when four fifths of the whole country is radically progressive. I cannot believe such criminal folly is possible."¹³ Not satisfied with this rebuke to Mack and the sub-committee, Bryan wired the following message to Clark and Wilson and five progressive, favorite-son candidates:¹⁴

In the interest of harmony I suggested to the subcommittee. . . the advisability of recommending as temporary chairman some progressive acceptable to the leading progressive candidates for the presidential nomination. I took it for granted that no committee-man interested in democratic success would desire to offend the members of a convention overwhelmingly progressive by naming a reactionary to sound the keynote. . .

Eight members of the subcommittee, however, have, over the protest of the remaining eight, agreed upon not only a reactionary, but upon the one democrat, who. . . is, in the eyes of the public, most conspicuously identified with the reactionary element of the party.

I shall be pleased to join you and your friends in opposing this selection by the full committee or by the convention.

Kindly answer here.¹⁵

This appeal for support shows how serious Bryan considered the situation.

The responses of Wilson and Clark proved important in the convention, and

¹³Baker, Wilson, Life and Letters, III, 335.

¹⁴The five other telegrams went to Governors John Burke of North Dakota, Thomas Marshall of Indiana, Eugene Foss of Massachusetts and Simeon Baldwin of Connecticut, and Mayor William Gaynor of New York. Commoner, June 28, 1912, p.1.

¹⁵Ibid.

will, therefore, be quoted at length. Wilson answered in a clear-cut statement, backing Bryan solidly:

You are right. . . . The Baltimore convention is to be the convention of progressives--the men who are progressive in principle and by conviction. It must, if it is not to be put in a wrong light before the country, express its convictions in its organization and choice of the men who are to speak for it. You are to be a member of the convention and are entirely within your rights in doing everything within your power to bring that result about.

No one will doubt where my sympathies lie, and you will, I am sure, find my friends in the convention acting upon a clear conviction and always in the interest of the people's cause. I am happy in the confidence that they need no suggestion from me.¹⁶

Champ Clark's reply was a noncommittal appeal for party harmony. He straddled the issue, hoping to win the support of progressives as well as reactionaries, especially the ninety votes of New York:

Have consulted with committee having my interests in charge and agree with them that the supreme consideration should be to prevent any discord in the convention. Friends of mine on the sub-committee of arrangements have already presented the name of Ollie James in the sub-committee.

I believe that if all join in the interest of harmony in an appeal to the entire national committee to avoid controversies in matters of organization that the committee will so arrange as to leave the platform and nomination of candidates as the only real issues on which delegates need divide.¹⁷

Bryan let the world know that he intended to do everything in his power to oppose Parker. Shortly after arriving in Baltimore Bryan wrote for the press that the progressives were trying to agree on a candidate. If the national committee should vote for Judge Parker, Bryan threatened to carry the fight to the floor of the convention, where the delegates would get a chance to prove their progressiveness. Parker's "selection as temporary chairman," wrote the anxious

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid. That Bryan regarded Clark's answer as a straddle, cf. Bryan, Memoirs, p. 166.

Nebraskan, "would be an announcement to the public that the convention is a reactionary convention. It might make all the professions it liked; it might talk as it would about progressiveness, but what it said would not atone for what it did."¹⁸ The next day, while the full committee was in session, Bryan said he would propose some progressive as temporary chairman. "If I fail in my effort to find a candidate, I shall myself be a candidate."¹⁹

The Democratic national committee, composed of one man from each state or territory, fifty-three in all, met Monday, June 24, at noon. National chairman Mack relinquished the chair long enough to defend his nomination of Judge Parker a few days before in the sub-committee meeting. He said that after Bryan had refused the office, Judge Parker seemed the obvious choice, "because he, too, had been a candidate for the Presidency." Nominating Parker, Mack considered "good politics," especially since the New York Democratic leaders would willingly accept any candidate proposed by the other committeemen for the permanent chairmanship, "whether he be a progressive or conservative or what not."²⁰ The debate was opened by two committeemen who opposed Parker. Several others spoke in support of Parker or against him. Joseph Davies of Wisconsin then made a clear and eloquent appeal to New York to show true loyalty to the party by accepting a progressive. "[T]here is," he reminded them, "a great body of thinking, independent Democrats who would regard [Parker's] nomination here as

¹⁸Bryan, Tale of Convs., pp. 110-113.

¹⁹Ibid. 117-118.

²⁰Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 476-478.

an indication of Wall Street control." T. Bruce Kremer of Montana followed with an appeal for a common keynote, one which Parker could give and which would be acceptable to all. Philip Hall of Nebraska, speaking obviously for Bryan, threatened that Bryan would oppose Parker in the convention, even becoming a candidate himself, if necessary.²¹

The committee now realized how serious the situation was. Remembering well how Roosevelt had just split the Republican party, they moved to adjourn till seven that evening. Meantime a committee of Hall and Mack should call on Bryan and Parker to bring about an "amicable adjustment of the question." Hall and Mack reported that evening that Bryan and Parker had discussed the situation with each other and with them. Both, however, refused to "recede from the position they had taken." Bryan, furthermore, would not promise to abide by the decision of the national committee.²² Apparently "amicable adjustments" were out of the question.

Since the attempt at compromise had failed, the committee proceeded to vote. Robert Ewing of Louisiana²³ nominated Ollie James of Kentucky to oppose Parker. Ewing was a Wilson man, which complicated the picture since James was supposed to be Clark's choice. Clark's supporters were voting, not for James, but for Parker. Urey Woodson of Kentucky, a Clark man, insisted that James had refused to let his name be used in opposition to Parker. Woodson therefore cast Kentucky's vote for Parker. When New Jersey, Wilson's state, was called,

²¹Ibid. 478-484.

²²Ibid. 484-486.

²³The Proceedings are obviously incorrect in saying "Ewing of Missouri." Cf. Ibid. 486.

Judge Robert Hudspeth read a statement explaining his vote:

After a conference of the Wilson men, it was decided that no candidate for Temporary Chairman would be presented in the interest of Governor Wilson. This is merely the maintenance of a decision which was arrived at long before the question of the Temporary Chairmanship came up.

There is apparently a clear majority of progressives in this Committee who are committed to the candidacy of either Speaker Clark or Governor Wilson. If they stand united the people's cause is won and the progressives control the temporary organization; if we are divided the progressive cause fails.

We therefore cast our support with Mr. Ollie James, of Kentucky, even though he be the announced Clark candidate.

We do this that the cause of the people and Progressive Democracy shall not fail, or, if it fail, the responsibility will be upon others and not upon us. I vote for Mr. James.

Woodson of Kentucky jumped to his feet to answer Hudspeth. "I wish to call attention to the fact that Mr. James was put in nomination by Mr. Ewing, who is for Wilson and not for Clark. Mr. James is not a candidate and is being voted for here without his knowledge or consent." The voting proceeded, and when the ballots were counted Parker held the majority, due largely to the support he had received from the Clark backers.²⁴

That night, the eve of the convention, Bryan heard the unfavorable results of the committee meeting. With his temper already aroused²⁵ he went into action, trying to find a candidate to oppose Parker. He first called in

²⁴The vote was Parker 31, James 20, O'Gorman 2. Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 486-490. The only solidly Wilson states which voted for Parker were Maine, Pennsylvania and Texas. The delegates from both Pennsylvania and Texas, however, asked their national committeeman (Guffey and Johnston respectively) to vote against Parker, but the request was disregarded. Commoner, June 28, 1912, p. 3.

²⁵The following incidents show that Bryan was angry. Chicago Daily Tribune, June 24, 1912, pt. 1, p. 1: "[James] Vardaman went to Bryan and tried to effect a compromise on the temporary chairmanship by informing [Bryan] . . . that all of Judge Parker's friends had agreed. . . to name Bryan as permanent chairman. Bryan and Vardaman had been close friends for many years.

Ollie James who refused because the Clark men, and even his own state of Kentucky, were supporting Parker.²⁶ Bryan then sent for O'Gorman, Wilson's choice in the contest, but as O'Gorman was from New York, Parker's state, he felt bound to support Parker. Bryan next turned to Senator Kern of Indiana, who also was reluctant to be a candidate for temporary chairman, but since he did not make his refusal absolute, Bryan decided to nominate him to oppose Parker.²⁷ And in this way Bryan passed the eve of the convention.

"Vardaman later told his friends that when he made the suggestion to Bryan the latter's manner became so frigid that Vardaman picked up his hat and started to leave the room. Then he turned to Bryan.

"I thought," he said, "our personal and political relations were intimate enough to permit me to talk about this matter to you."

"Putting his hand on Vardaman's shoulders Bryan told the former governor of Mississippi that he did not mean to offend him. Then the two talked over the matter, but without result." Cf. also Arthur W. Dunn, From Harrison to Harding (New York, 1922), II, 187 -- "I interviewed [Bryan] several times on Democratic proceedings, particularly when the national committee decided to make Alton B. Parker the temporary chairman. Bryan considered that a distinct slap in the face for himself and he determined to resent it." Bryan, of course, would have denied that it was the personal insult that he resented.

²⁶Bryan, Tale of Convs., p. 132. This is Bryan's version. It will be remembered, however, that Woodson of Kentucky gave as his reason for supporting Parker in the full committee meeting, that James had refused to let his name be used in opposition to Parker. What probably happened was that Clark's managers agreed to support Parker for temporary chairman in exchange for the ninety votes of New York, which would be given to Clark at some propitious moment in the balloting. Cf. Link, Wilson, p. 434. This would explain why James, a Clark supporter, would be reluctant to oppose Parker, and why Woodson said James would not be a candidate. Bryan's version, therefore, is probably true. In his Memoirs Bryan writes that James conferred with Clark's managers after Bryan first asked him to be a candidate for temporary chairman. James returned later that evening to tell Bryan that the managers would not think of letting him (James) be a candidate in opposition to Parker. (p. 166) Reports of a deal between Clark's managers and the New York delegation were mentioned in the papers. Cf. Chicago Daily Tribune, June 22, 1912, pt. 1, p. 1; Ibid, June 25, pt. 1, p. 1; New York Daily Tribune, June 26, 1912, pt. 1, p. 4.

²⁷Bryan, Memoirs, pp. 166-167; Tale of Convs. pp. 132-133.

The Democratic National Convention was scheduled to convene at noon, Tuesday June 25. Confusion, however, held sway in the old armory. The official convention call was not read till 12:34 p.m. Mack then introduced James Cardinal Gibbons who delivered the opening invocation. As the prelate prayed, Bryan stood to the rear of the platform, eyes closed, swaying noticeably from side to side, his lips moving slightly. Immediately after the prayer Mack read the list of temporary officers as suggested by the national committee, beginning with Alton B. Parker. As a rule the nomination would have been approved by the convention as a mere matter of form, but not this year.

Bryan stepped to the front of the platform and a cheer rose from the floor. He looked pale; his face set and rigid. He shook his head and attempted to quiet the audience with his hand, but the cheers spread from delegation to delegation and up into the galleries. The delegates from Ohio, Wisconsin, Texas, New Jersey, Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma were on their feet yelling for their old hero, while an ominous silence hung over the delegations from New York, Indiana, and Illinois.²⁸

Bryan appealed to Mack for order and finally began: "Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the Convention, I rise to place in nomination for the office of temporary chairman of this convention the name of Honorable John W. Kern, of Indiana." Kern's name started the uproar again. When he could be heard, Bryan continued, "And in thus dissenting from the judgment of our National Committee

²⁸The New York, Indiana and Illinois delegations were dominated by the three big Democratic bosses of the day, Charles Murphy, Tom Taggart, and Roger Sullivan respectively. The details of the speech are taken from Commoner, July 5, 1912, pp. 1, 2, 7, and 12. Bryan's speech is recorded in the Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 4-7.

as expressed in its recommendation, I recognize that the burden of proof is upon me." Bryan gave as his credentials the fact that "in three campaigns I have been the champion of the Democratic party's principles, and that in three campaigns I have received the vote of six millions and a half of Democrats." These votes showed that he had the confidence of these Democrats. "Confidence . . . carries with it certain responsibilities, and I would not be worthy of the confidence and the affection that have been showered upon me . . . if I were not willing to risk humiliation in [the people's] defense."

At length he arrived at the text for his talk, "He 'never sold the truth to serve the hour,'" words of Jefferson which appeared in the hall under a large portrait of that "hero of Monticello." "I would not be worthy of the support I have received if I were willing to sell the truth to serve the present hour." Bryan then explained that he was not trying to disturb party harmony. He told of the recommendations he had made to the committee in order to preserve harmony. The importance of this "epoch-making Convention" was stressed and the years of labor and sacrifice which made it possible. And "now, when the hour of triumph comes, the song of victory should be sung by one whose heart has been in the fight." This led Bryan into a lengthy tribute to the services of Senator Kern.

The speech was now being interrupted by applause and hisses, by cries of "Parker" and "Kern." Bryan contrasted the two candidates, showing that Parker was controlled by the same "predatory wealth" that dominated the Republican convention. "I appeal to you," Bryan cried, reaching his climax, "Let the commencement of this Convention be such a commencement that the Democrats of this country may raise their heads among their fellows and say, 'The Democratic

party is true to the people. You cannot frighten it with your Ryans nor buy it with your Belmonts."²⁹ This phrase electrified the crowd. The old master of the "Cross of Gold" speech could still thrill an audience. Men were on their feet waving hats and shouting frantically.

When the spell was broken, however, and the cheers were subsiding, Bryan continued his speech. He had passed his natural climax and a reaction was setting in. As he rambled on, paragraph after paragraph, excoriating Parker, the cries of "Parker, Parker," grew louder. Every other phrase was being interrupted by the impatient crowd. "And so, with a last metaphor about a cloud of smoke by day, poor Bryan who had begun as a prophet, concluded as a bore and sat down amid a roar one-quarter of enthusiasm, three-quarters of relief."³⁰

After Bryan finally concluded, Senator Kern pushed his way down the aisle and mounted the platform. He was a small man and was plainly nervous as he waited for the cheers and jeers to subside. He gave his reasons for refusing the nomination. Turning to the New York delegation he made a dramatic appeal to Parker for "that kind of harmony which alone will bring victory." He proposed seven Democrats who could be compromise candidates for the temporary chairmanship. He appealed to Parker to withdraw and accept any one of them in his place. The convention held its breath a moment, but Parker sat silent in

²⁹I.e. Thomas Fortune Ryan and August Belmont, two very wealthy tycoons who were symbols of "predatory wealth" and who, as we shall see in the next chapter, were delegates to the Democratic convention. Probably few delegates realized at this time that Ryan and Belmont sat in their very midst.

³⁰New York World, June 26, 1912, cited in Link, Wilson, p. 436. Cf. also, New York Daily Times, June 26, 1912, pt. 1, p. 1.

his chair, making no move to accept the challenge. Kern then turned to Charles Murphy, boss of Tammany, "the leader of the New York Democracy, who holds that Democracy in the hollow of his hand. What response have I? If there is to be no response, then let the responsibility rest where it belongs If my proposition for harmony is to be ignored, and this deplorable battle is to go on, there is only one man fit to lead the hosts of progress, and that is the man who has been at the forefront for sixteen years, the great American tribune, William Jennings Bryan."³¹

This shrewd move by Kern seems to have surprised all, including the "great American tribune." Now the fight was clearly between Parker and Bryan. The Commoner stepped to the front of the platform to try to get a hearing over the yells and hoots:

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I tried to get the committee to agree upon a progressive, and when it did not agree upon a progressive, I went to. . . Congressman James, and urged him to be our leader in this fight, but he felt that the conditions were such that he could not honorably accept. . . I went to Senator O'Gorman and urged him to accept this leadership, and then I appealed to Mr. Kern to accept it, and I stand ready to support any progressive who will lead this battle.

But if no other progressive appears, I shall accept the leadership and let you express through your votes for or against me your advocacy of or opposition to what we have fought for for sixteen years.³²

Theodore Bell of California got the floor but could not be heard. When at last he got some attention, he minimized the distinction between the two wings of the party. He challenged Bryan to state what changes had made Parker

³¹ Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 7-9; Commoner, July 5, 1912, p. 2.

³² Proceedings of the Convention, p. 10; Commoner, July 5, 1912, p. 2.

unacceptable in 1912 when he was fully acceptable in 1908.³³ Mack kept up a constant rapping with his gavel but could not keep order. John Fitzgerald of New York managed to get some attention and was trying to argue for Parker when a Texan climbed on his chair and yelled, "Are you the distinguished New York Congressman who supported Joe Cannon?"³⁴ Pandemonium broke loose and Fitzgerald's speech was ended. The sergeant-at-arms shouted at the top of his voice threatening to clear the galleries. Mack pounded his gavel and a score of delegates exchanging threats, were on the verge of exchanging blows. Mack directed that a vote be taken. Luke Lea of Tennessee jumped to his feet exclaiming, "I protest against this gag rule. We will not have Chicago tactics repeated on this floor." Bryan likewise objected, "Our conventions are conducted according to rules. The chairman announced that the roll would be called while persons were standing ready to speak."³⁵ Luke Lea moved that each side get fifteen additional minutes for debate. There was a chorus of no's but Mack recognized Cone Johnson of Texas. With a voice as loud as a human fog-horn he quieted the convention, speaking forcefully in Bryan's defense. He concluded with a dramatic statement, "I care nothing about how this fight originated. . . . This one thing I know--the fight is on and Bryan is on one side and Wall Street is on the other. . . . To put the knife of defeat into

³³Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 10-11. Parker had campaigned for Bryan in 1908.

³⁴Link, p. 437. The reference is to Joseph G. "Uncle Joe" Cannon, who, as speaker, ruled the House of Representatives with an iron fist from 1901 to 1910. His power was then broken although some conservative congressmen voted for him to retain full power.

³⁵Commoner, July 5, 1912, p. 2; Proceedings of the Convention, p. 12.

Bryan will send a chill of horror through 250,000 democrats in Texas, and through the hearts of 7,000,000 loyal democrats in the nation."³⁶

When the vote was taken Parker was elected as temporary chairman by a vote of 579 to Bryan's 508. Clark's managers gave Parker enough votes to insure his success, although most of the Western delegates refused to side with Parker against their old leader. The Wilson delegates, for the most part, voted for Bryan.³⁷

A reaction set in immediately, for as Parker was escorted to the platform to give the keynote, the hall started to empty. "[T]he galleries rose . . . and left a rather dazed old gentleman reading a long manuscript, nervously looking over his glasses occasionally at the vanishing crowd."³⁸ The noise of the delegates leaving grew so loud that the keynote was postponed till eight o'clock that evening.

Judge Parker read his keynote that evening and was heard attentively by the few he drew to listen. Mr. Bryan was among those absent. The various committees were provided for and the rules of the last convention were adopted. This included the two-thirds rule which made the presidential nomination dependent upon two-thirds of the votes instead of a simple majority, a rule

³⁶Commoner, July 5, 1912, p. 2.

³⁷Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 17-19. On the first ballot for the presidential nomination Clark received the vote of 440 delegates. If we consider these 440 as the basic Clark supporters we will find that more than half of Clark's votes were cast for Parker in this fight. Missouri, Clark's home state, cast 22 of its 36 votes against Bryan. Kentucky, a state solidly behind Clark, voted 17½ for Parker, 7½ for Bryan. Arkansas, another Clark state, cast all 18 votes for Parker. Professor Link says that 228 of Clark's votes went to Parker. (p. 437.)

³⁸William A. White, cited in Link, p. 438.

which was destined to play a major role in the rest of the convention. The delegates then closed their first stormy day of convention till noon the following day,³⁹ probably with a hope that both the weather and the debates would be somewhat cooler. Little did they suspect what was in store for them.

While quiet settles over the old armory, and the clouds of cigar smoke begin to dissipate, let us pause a moment and try to understand what had happened. Bryan had done a lot of talking about progressives and the influence of predatory wealth, about fighting the people's cause and opposing the Ryan's and Belmont's, but when it came to a vote the "Wall Street crowd" produced enough votes to defeat Bryan. Undoubtedly Bryan was surprised by the defeat, for he had expected to find progressives in control at Baltimore.⁴⁰ Yet in an all-out fight he was defeated. Was his defeat as decisive as it seemed? One anti-Bryan paper exulted that at last, "Mr. Bryan's fangs have been drawn."⁴¹ This exultation was slightly premature.

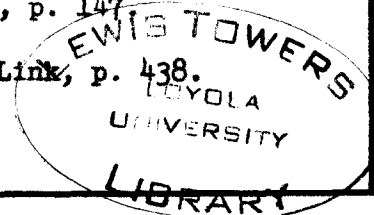
One thing is certain, Bryan forced an issue. The conservatives in the party were pushed into a position that closely resembled the Taft reactionaries. Bryan insisted that the national committee, "masquerading as progressives,"⁴² was really maneuvering to control the convention and to nominate one of their own. Although this is most probably a great over-simplification, Bryan, and many throughout the country, were convinced that Baltimore was the

³⁹Commoner, July 5, 1912, p. 3.

⁴⁰Ibid. July 26, 1912, p. 7; Bryan, Tale of Convs., p. 147.

⁴¹Chattanooga Daily Times, June 26, 1912, cited in Link, p. 438.

⁴²Bryan, Tale of Convs., p. 147.



scene of a battle between the forces of the wealthy bankers and the reform-conscious progressives. Cone Johnson caught the spirit well when he said, "the fight is on and Bryan is on one side and Wall Street is on the other." Whether or not this is a true picture of the situation, the forces of evil battling the forces of light, it is the picture as Bryan and millions of Americans viewed it.

The fight over the temporary chairmanship made another point evident to Bryan. Wilson had stood firmly with Bryan on the side of the progressives, while Clark had hedged, hoping to win the nomination by gaining the support of the conservatives. His answer to Bryan's telegram before the convention was noncommittal, while Wilson clearly refused compromise.⁴³ During the balloting, both in the national committee meeting and in the convention, Clark's managers gave Parker enough votes to assure his victory. "It was understood that Mr. Clark himself was not taking sides," Bryan wrote, "but his manager worked manfully for Parker."⁴⁴ Bryan was impressed by Wilson's firm stand. In the full committee Wilson's supporters, on advice of the governor, had voted for Ollie James, Clark's candidate. Many Clark men had abandoned James to vote for Parker. Thus, Bryan reasoned, Clark's managers were responsible for Parker's success.⁴⁵ "Governor Wilson," Bryan observed, "came out strong against Parker

⁴³It is interesting to note that William McCombs, Wilson's head manager at Baltimore, was heartbroken by Wilson's uncompromising stand. He was hoping to win New York's ninety votes for Wilson. "How could he win the New York and other delegations," McCombs wondered, "with Wilson supporting Bryan?" Baker, Wilson, Life and Letters, III, 337; Link, p. 433.

⁴⁴Bryan, Tale of Convs., p. 130. This newsletter was written on June 25, shortly after Bryan had been defeated in the convention by Parker.

⁴⁵Ibid. 131-132.

and so far as I know I received all the votes of the Wilson delegates."⁴⁶

After Wilson's nomination Bryan said that Wilson's "action in coming out strongly against Mr. Parker for temporary chairman was the turning point in his campaign."⁴⁷ People were not too surprised, therefore, when at a crucial point in the convention, Bryan threw his support to Wilson. Bryan realized that Clark was angling for New York's ninety votes, votes supposedly owned by Wall Street.⁴⁸

But Bryan was not the only man who viewed the battle as a fight of progressives against reactionaries, with Clark slipping, willy-nilly, into the reactionary camp, and Wilson standing firm with the progressives. From the entire country a cry arose that the Wall Street forces must be defeated at Baltimore. Militant editorials in the Midwest, Bryan's stronghold, and even in the East, cried out against the boss-control which threatened the convention.⁴⁹ During the week the delegates in Baltimore received over a hundred thousand telegrams.⁵⁰ The common chorus of the vast majority was that the

⁴⁶Ibid. 129. We can be sure, however, that at least twenty-four of Wilson's delegates voted for Parker.

⁴⁷Bryan, Statement to the press, published July 3, 1912, cited in Bryan, Tale of Convs. p. 206.

⁴⁸Professor Link narrates that a Wilson supporter approached Bryan after this defeat and told him that, since Clark threw his influence against him, Bryan should come out in the open for the only real progressive, Wilson. Bryan is said to have replied, "I know what has happened, I am with you"(pp.437-438.)

⁴⁹Ibid. 438.

⁵⁰An editor's footnote in Bryan, Tale of Convs., p. 152, says, "These telegrams were so numerous that an effort was made to ascertain just how many there were. About 110,000 messages are known to have been received by delegates. Some were signed by many persons. Mr. Bryan himself received 1,128 telegrams from 31,331 persons in forty-six states."

issue had been drawn, Bryan versus Wall Street, and that Wilson was the only one who could carry on the fight against the control of "special interests." A man high in the ranks of the Wilson forces, who watched the fight from the ring side, wrote:

Never in my life have I seen the force of public opinion so illustrated as at this convention; when it became evident that Clark was throwing all the strength he could to Parker for temporary chairman in order to secure the ninety votes from New York, and that Wilson was the only man who dared to openly oppose this selection, I was convinced that Mr. Clark had lost more than he had gained. . . . Mr. Wilson at once appeared against the skyline as the real foe of special interests and the only man who would make no terms with the Belmont-Ryan crowd.⁵¹

Bryan had lost the first round, but he was not out of the fight by any means.

⁵¹Thomas W. Gregory to Colonel E. M. House, July 9, 1912, edited by Arthur S. Link under the title, "A Letter from One of Wilson's Managers," American Historical Review, L (July 1945), 772-773.

CHAPTER III

THE NOMINATION OF WOODROW WILSON

The convention reconvened at noon the next day. As the committees were all occupied, there was no business to be done in the sweltering convention hall. Those present were entertained by some flamboyant political oratory until a quarter after two. Then they took a recess till eight o'clock that evening, after a singularly quiet afternoon.¹ When the delegates met again that evening the chairman of the committee on rules and order of business submitted the committee report. The only unusual point was that the presidential and vice-presidential candidates were to be selected before the resolution committee would make its report. Apparently this reversed order of procedure was at Bryan's suggestion, for he was a leading member of the platform committee. The report was adopted viva voce.²

The chairman of the rules committee next made a report on the so-called "unit-rule." This rule, which was traditional in Democratic conventions, would make it obligatory for all members of a state delegation to cast their ballots for whichever candidate the whole state had instructed them to vote

¹Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 41-56

²Ibid. 57-58; Commoner, July 5, 1912, p. 3.

for. All delegates, even those chosen from a section of the state favoring a different candidate, had to follow the will of the majority in the delegation. It would affect chiefly the nineteen delegates from Ohio who wanted to vote for Wilson instead of Harmon, the favorite-son, who controlled the Ohio delegation. The rules committee presented a majority report in favor of retaining the unit-rule, but a minority report was also presented. When Newton Baker, mayor of Cleveland, delivered a powerful and convincing appeal for abrogation of the unit-rule, his burning oratory won the day, and the minority report was adopted.³ During the lively debate the name of Wilson was mentioned, which set off a wild demonstration. The monotonous chant of the galleries, "We want Wilson," was lost in the general uproar. John Sharp Williams on the platform swung his hat above his head leading cheers for Wilson. The Texans unfurled a large white banner reading, "Forty for Wilson." A great cheer arose as the Pennsylvania delegation hoisted its banner, "Give us Wilson and we'll give you Pennsylvania." The band swung into the "Star Spangled Banner." When they played "Maryland My Maryland," the galleries rose and cheered. Temporary chairman Parker pounded his gavel to no avail. The boisterous demonstration finally subsided after more than a half-hour of yelling.⁴

Press headlines the next day give a clew to the significance of this demonstration and of the unit-rule fight. "Bryan in Control: Unit Rule Dropped--Sudden Shift in Night Session of Baltimore Convention Favors Wilson

³Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 59-78. The vote was 565½ to 492½.

⁴Commoner, July 5, 1912, pp. 3-4.

and Progressives by Narrow Margin,--Clark Had Been a Favorite."⁵ "Convention Smashes the Unit Rule; Great Demonstration for Wilson."⁶ "Bryan-Wilson Forces Smash Democratic Party's Unit Rule. . . Blow to Champ Clark."⁷ This victory not only gave Wilson the nineteen precious votes from Ohio, but added enthusiasm and confidence to the Wilson ranks. After the unit-rule debate the convention adjourned.

Parker called the assembled delegates to order at noon on Thursday, June 27, the third day of the convention. A report from the credentials committee was first on the agenda. A dispute had arisen in the committee meeting over the South Dakota delegation. Two delegations from that state, one representing Wilson and the other Clark, claimed the right to be seated. A majority report of the committee on credentials favored the Clark delegates, which was natural since Clark men controlled the committee. The fight was brought to the convention floor when the Wilson men on the committee submitted a minority report. Lengthy arguments were given for both sides, and when it was put to a vote, the ten Wilson delegates were seated.⁸ Another key victory for the Wilson forces.

⁵New York Daily Tribune, June 27, 1912, pt. 1, p. 1.

⁶New York Daily Times, June 27, 1912, pt. 1, p. 1.

⁷Chicago Daily Tribune, June 27, 1912, pt. 1, p. 1.

⁸Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 81-94. Professor Link has brought out an extremely important fact which lies behind this vote. While the credentials committee was considering the claims of the various state delegations, two delegations presented credentials from the Chicago area, one group controlled by Roger Sullivan and the other by William R. Hearst, of journalism fame, and the mayor of Chicago, Carter Harrison. Luke Lea, a Wilson man, made an agreement to support the claims of Sullivan in the committee meeting in exchange for a promise that Sullivan would vote in the convention in favor of

In the report of the committee on permanent organization, Ollie James was recommended as permanent chairman and was given the office without a division. Bryan had been offered the permanent chairmanship but refused.⁹ After an address by the permanent chairman the convention recessed till that evening.¹⁰

Another storm was to break that Thursday evening which had been brewing since early in the morning. On Wednesday Bryan had worked late at the platform committee meeting. He returned to his hotel room, and about 3 a.m. Thursday when he was about to retire, his brother, Charles W. Bryan, entered W. J.'s room for a conference. He told William Jennings he had learned that the ninety contaminated votes of New York were to be cast for Clark sometime early in the balloting. This would place the candidate under the control of the Wall Street interests. Charles therefore suggested that his brother introduce a resolution to throw Thomas Fortune Ryan and August Belmont, two

the Wilson delegation from South Dakota. By this "deal" the Wilson forces gained Sullivan's support in the fight to win the ten seats of South Dakota, to which it seems, they had a perfect right. But more important, they made a powerful friend in Boss Sullivan who was to be a deciding factor in giving Wilson the nomination. Wilson men knew they would never get Illinois' fifty-eight votes for Wilson if Hearst controlled them, so they had nothing to lose by assuring Sullivan control of the Illinois delegation. Although Sullivan was to cast the fifty-eight votes for Clark for forty-two ballots, his change to Wilson on the forty-third was the start of the stampede to Wilson. Mr. Link points out that careful research seems to show that Sullivan had no rightful claim to the seats he was given as a result of this agreement with Luke Lea. Thus there is a very interesting parallel between this bargain made by Wilson's managers with Boss Sullivan, and the bargain of Clark's managers with Boss Murphy over the temporary chairmanship. Luke Lea's shady "deal" "affected the outcome of the convention as greatly as any other single event at Baltimore." (Link, Wilson, pp. 440-441).

⁹Bryan, Memoirs, p. 170.

¹⁰Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 120-127. Professor Link indicates that Tammany Hall made an attempt to retain Parker as permanent chairman, but was detected and blocked. (Wilson, p. 438.)

notorious representatives of Wall Street, out of the convention. Charles reasoned that if Clark's managers voted against such a resolution they would lose all progressive support and some true progressive would be nominated. If Clark's managers voted for the resolution the New York delegation would refuse to support Clark. Thus he would not appear to the voters as under Wall Street's control. William looked up and told his brother to go ahead with the plan. W. J. dictated a resolution. Charles was to confer with some leading progressives about the advisability of introducing it in the convention.¹¹

In the morning William Jennings stated in his newsletter for the afternoon press that some action should be taken by the convention to denounce any alliance between the money magnates and the party leaders.¹² Charles conferred with several Wilson managers. All opposed his plan. That evening William Jennings, returning to his room, found his brother disheartened by the universal opposition to his plan. W. J. Bryan felt understandably reluctant to introduce such "fireworks" into the convention entirely on his own authority, but on the way to the armory, he decided to take the step, mostly from a conviction of duty.¹³

After the recess the delegates reassembled at eight o'clock Thursday evening. Bryan went to the platform. He asked Ollie James to recognize him so he could make a statement. He requested unanimous consent of the convention

¹¹Account of Charles W. Bryan, written November 23, 1913, printed in New York Sunday Times, March 6, 1921, pt. 7, pp. 2, 4. Cf. also Bryan, Memoirs, p. 174. Thomas Fortune Ryan sat in the Virginia delegation; August Belmont was in the New York delegation.

¹²Bryan, Tale of Convs., pp. 158-161.

¹³Bryan, Memoirs, pp. 175-176.

to introduce a resolution. Turning a deaf ear to the objections of several delegates James permitted Bryan to read his resolution. "My resolution is as follows," Bryan began.

'Resolved, That in this crisis in our party's career and in our country's history this convention sends greeting to the people of the United States, and assures them that the party of Jefferson and of Jackson is still the champion of popular government and equality before the law. As proof of our fidelity to the people, we hereby declare ourselves opposed to the nomination of any candidate for president who is the representative of or under obligation to J. Pierpont Morgan, Thomas F. Ryan, August Belmont, or any other member of the privilege-hunting and favor-seeking class.

'Be it further resolved, That we demand the withdrawal from this convention of any delegate or delegates constituting or representing the above-named interests.¹⁴

With a bolt of lightning and a peal of thunder the storm broke. Groans, cheers, hisses, yells, roars, and hoots echoed through the hall. Raging men jumped on their chairs shaking their fists. One man charged the platform denouncing Bryan till he frothed at the mouth and was carried away by friends.¹⁵ The police and sergeant-at-arms were unable to still the howling crowd. Finally Bryan made himself heard.

Members of this Convention, this is an extraordinary resolution; but extraordinary conditions need extraordinary remedies. . . . There is not a delegate in this convention who does not know that an effort is being made right now to sell the Democratic party into bondage to the predatory interests of this nation. . . . I need not tell you that J. Pierpont Morgan, Thomas F. Ryan and August Belmont are three of the men connected with the great money trust of this country, who are as despotic in their rule of the business of the country, and as merciless in their command of their slaves, as any man in the country. . . .

¹⁴Proceedings of the Convention, p. 129.

¹⁵Bryan, Memoirs, p. 177.

My friends, I cannot speak for you. You have your own responsibility; but if this is to be a convention run by these men, if our nominee is to be their representative and tool, I pray you to give us, who represent constituencies that do not want this, a chance to go on record with our protest against it.

Bryan offered to withdraw the second part of the resolution if the New York and Virginia delegations, in which Belmont and Ryan sat, would request it. When Bryan finished, short, stocky Congressman Hal Flood of Virginia came to the platform. Looking squarely at Bryan, who flushed noticeably, Flood said, "In the name of the sovereign state of Virginia. . . I accept the insolent proposition made by the only man in this convention who wants to destroy the prospect of Democratic success." This scathing rebuke caused the greatest tumult of the convention. Bryan faced a seething, hostile mob. He withdrew the second part of his resolution, demanding a vote on the first section. "Sit down, down, sit down," was the greeting he received. When he did sit down there were a great many more hisses than cheers.¹⁶

The first part of the resolution was reread and a vote was taken. At first states were voting against it, but soon it became evident that the general tenor of the delegates was to let it pass by a large vote and laugh it off. After all, the first section merely said that the Democratic party intended to nominate a candidate who was not a vassal of the selfish Wall Street interests. The convention could not well defeat such a resolution without committing suicide. The fact that New York and Virginia¹⁷ voted in favor of it

¹⁶Commoner, July 5, 1912, p. 5; Proceedings of the Convention,

¹⁷One-half vote from Virginia was cast against the resolution, probably the vote of Ryan.

made Bryan look quite ridiculous in the convention. Bryan's resolution, without the teeth of the second part, passed by a vote of 883 to 201½. The convention settled down to the real work of the evening, the nominations for a presidential candidate.¹⁸

Although the long night of speeches and demonstrations that followed is extremely interesting, the story need not be retold. Each long-winded nominating speech was the cue for a wild demonstration. The Clark demonstration lasted an hour and five minutes, starting sometime after midnight. When Wilson was nominated his faithful followers were determined to out-yell the Clark forces. The Wilson demonstration quieted down at 3:25 Friday morning, an hour and a quarter after it had begun. Day was breaking when the nominations were finished and a first ballot was taken at about seven o'clock, with Champ Clark ahead of Wilson 440½ to 324. Harmon came next with 148, followed by Underwood with 117½, then Marshall of Indiana with 31, Baldwin of Connecticut 22, Bryan 1, William Sulzer of New York 2, and 2 not voting. With the lines drawn for battle the convention adjourned till four o'clock that afternoon.¹⁹ Little wonder the delegates were anxious for some rest after eleven and a half unbroken hours in session. Bryan's "fireworks" it seemed then, had merely served as prelude to a night of yelling and horn blowing.

After their day-time nap the delegates were back in the armory by four o'clock that afternoon to continue the balloting. The balloting procedure was something like this. A man on an elevated platform jutting like a cape into the lake of men, shouted the name "Alabama." With his hand to his ear he

¹⁸ Ibid. 137-138; Commoner, July 5, 1912, p. 5; Bryan, Tale of Convs. pp. 167-168; McAdoo, Crowded Years, pp. 149-150.

¹⁹ Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 139-198. Link, Wilson, pp. 445-448

listened for the reply, "Alabama casts twenty-four votes for Oscar Underwood." The words were repeated and a clerk with a megaphone notified the crowd to the right, fore, and left. The same process was repeated for Arizona, Arkansas, and all the other states and territories. Ballot followed ballot that Friday afternoon with only negligible gains for Clark and Wilson. Tennessee furnished the only variety by changing its vote on every ballot with ingenious unexpectedness. So the convention proceeded for nine ballots, Wilson gaining $28\frac{1}{2}$, Clark $11\frac{1}{2}$.²⁰

Shortly after midnight during the tenth ballot Boss Charles Murphy changed the ninety votes of New York from Harmon to Clark. Another jubilant demonstration followed. Frantic with delight, the Clark forces expected a landslide for New York's ninety votes assured Clark of more than a majority.²¹ Although the Democrats had retained the old two-thirds rule, no candidate since 1844 had received a majority without receiving the two-thirds necessary for nomination. Little wonder then that Clark's managers thought victory was within their grasp.

Bryan had been in the room of the resolutions committee when he heard the demonstration. He went to the hall, and when he heard what had happened he is supposed to have said, "A progressive candidate must not be besmirched by New York's vote."²² He took his place among the Nebraska delegation, where he could always be found during the long sessions that followed, seeking, as he

²⁰Ernest Hamlin Abbott, "The Game at Baltimore," Outlook, CI (July 6, 1912), 525; Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 200-219.

²¹Ibid. 219-221.

²²Baker, Wilson, Life and Letters, III, 349.

later would claim, "to save the Democratic Party from defeat at the polls."²³

At last, after nearly an hour of the Clark commotion, the hall was quiet enough for more balloting. The Wilson delegates held their breath. North Carolina gave Wilson 18, Underwood 6, Clark none. A cheer went up when North Dakota cast all ten votes for Wilson. Ohio gave Clark six, Wilson eleven, Harmon twenty-nine. Next came Oklahoma which had been giving Clark ten, Wilson ten. One Wilson delegate wanted to vote for Clark. William "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, Oklahoma's spokesman for Wilson, objected, saying that the ten Wilson votes should be cast as a unit. "[W]e have no objection if they want the roll called," he roared. However "we do insist that we shall not join Tammany in making the nomination." The Wilson forces went wild. After the strain of the last hour when defeat seemed so near, this defiant statement was just the antidote needed. It was the Wilson men's turn to parade and yell. For fifty-five minutes they staged a wild counterdemonstration, striving to convince all that the end was not yet.²⁴

When finally the tenth ballot was completed it showed that Clark had 556, eleven more than a majority, a gain of 104 over the previous ballot. Wilson had lost only two votes, holding 350½. The Clark forces could not muster any more votes on the next two ballots, dropping to 547½ on the twelfth, while Wilson picked up four precious votes. When the convention adjourned at a little past four o'clock Saturday morning after the twelfth ballot, it was be-

²³Bryan, Memoirs, pp. 179-181.

²⁴Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 219-221; Chicago Daily News, June 29, pt. 1, p. 4; Link, Wilson, p. 449.

coming apparent that Clark's landslide had failed to materialize.²⁵

Wilson's forces had held firm, and, more important, Clark's cohorts could not bring the Underwood managers to swing to Clark. Wilson and Underwood together controlled well over a third of the convention, and thus the veto over Clark's nomination. Clark's expected stampede was blocked largely because of this coalition. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray's clear-cut repudiation of Clark, branding him as the Wall Street choice, was also a great psychological factor bolstering the Wilson forces. The delegates were reminded of the Clark-Tammany deal which gave the temporary chairmanship to Parker. New York's ninety votes seemed to be the quid pro quo.²⁶ Bryan, it should be remembered, had thus far done nothing to defeat Clark, although on the morrow he would drive the last nails into Clark's coffin.

The delegates were back in the hall by one o'clock Saturday afternoon, not knowing that an unbroken ten hour session of balloting was ahead of them. The thirteenth ballot showed a gain of seven for Clark, two for Wilson. When Nebraska was called on the fourteenth the delegation asked to be passed. Everyone anxiously waited till it was called at the end of the roll, guessing that another Bryanesque show was in store for them.

Bryan was already suspicious of Clark's managers. The Clark demonstration Friday night showed him how eager Clark's supporters were to receive what Bryan regarded as the tainted votes of Tammany.²⁷ After the adjournment early

²⁵Ibid. 449-450; Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 222-228.

²⁶New York Daily Tribune, June 30, 1912, pt. 1, p. 8.

²⁷Bryan, Tale of Conns. p. 192. This was the newsletter written the day after Bryan's action on the fourteenth ballot.

Saturday morning he pondered what he should do about this new turn of events. He felt sure that Clark's ready acceptance of the Wall Street votes would seriously harm his appeal at the polls. "There is too much at stake to risk defeat," Bryan reflected a day later, "as we would risk defeat if we had to spend the campaign in explaining how a candidate could owe his nomination to predatory interests without danger to his administration. Mr. Clark's friends spurn the thought of his being influenced by such support, but they forget that the masses of the people cannot know Mr. Clark personally, as his intimate friends do."²⁸ A good number of the delegates from Nebraska wanted to change their votes from Clark to Wilson, but Bryan was reluctant to make any sudden change, hoping that New York's vote would be changed to Underwood. In case a change was necessary, however, Bryan wrote a statement giving his reasons for changing his vote from Clark to Wilson. Bryan felt under obligation to oppose the nomination of any candidate by the reactionary forces in the party.²⁹

Before leaving for the convention hall Bryan wrote in his daily newsletter:

We are approaching the climax of this convention. The question that the convention has to decide is whether or not it will live up to the declaration made in the anti-Morgan-Ryan-Belmont resolution. The convention is now pledged . . . against the nomination of any man who is a representative of, or under obligation to, Morgan, Ryan, Belmont or any other person representing the favor-seeking and privilege-hunting class.

This is a solemn pledge made to the country. If it is broken it will be broken in the eyes of the public. . . . How can we tell whether a proposed candidate is the representative of, or obligated to, Morgan, Ryan and Belmont? . . . There is just one way, namely, to inquire whether he is willing to accept the nomination at their hands. . . .

²⁸Ibid. 192 and 187.

²⁹Bryan, Memoirs, pp. 179-183.

A candidate who would accept his support [Murphy's] would be an ingrate not to repay the obligation in the only coin which is legal tender in the office of the plunderbund, namely, government favors.³⁰

These were the ideas in Bryan's mind as he entered the convention hall, armed with a prepared statement which he knew would cause a major eruption.

On the thirteenth ballot everything was quiet. Bryan and the Nebraska delegation were apparently waiting to see if any changes would occur. When Nebraska was called for the fourteenth ballot the delegation asked to be passed for the present. A sense of expectation gathered as the rest of the ballot was taken. When Nebraska was again called one delegate demanded a poll of the delegation. Bryan's name headed the list. When he was called on to state how he voted he rose in his place and said, "As long as Mr. Ryan's agent -- as long as New York's 90 votes are recorded for Mr. Clark, I withhold my vote from him and cast it--."³¹ At this point all hell broke loose. There were yells of derision, angry shrieks, wild threats, unbroken by a single cheer. Sulzer of New York was at that moment taking Ollie James' place as chairman. Boss Charlie Murphy sent a message to Sulzer to rule Bryan out of order and not let him speak. When Sulzer made this decision a scream of indignation went up from the Bryan and Wilson men. When Bryan kept insisting on his right to speak, he was hissed violently as the Clark-Tammany factions yelled, "No, no, vote!" The hearty Wilson delegation from Texas climbed on its chairs and let out a yell, "Free speech, free speech." With the storm beating about his ears, Bryan suddenly left his place and walked up on the platform. At last Sulzer,

³⁰Bryan, Tale of Convs. 184-186.

³¹Proceedings of the Convention, p. 232.

realizing, it seems, that nothing was going to stop Bryan from having his say, recognized him.

The famed orator was never in better form. He discarded all tricks of oratory, even the grand gestures so much a part of his usual delivery. Here was a new Bryan, speaking with clear incisiveness, dropping all theatrical effects. He welcomed questions from those who would interrupt and distract him. His lightning retorts dominated and silenced these opponents.³²

"Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the Convention," Bryan began:

I wish to explain my vote only because my advice was not followed in my own delegation. I advised that those of us who are instructed for Mr. Clark should continue to vote for him until conditions arose that justified us in doing otherwise. I did not believe that the conditions had yet arisen, but not all of the delegates agreed with me, and then I was desirous that a poll should not be required; but if we are to have a division. . . I am now ready to cast my vote and to give my reasons for so doing.

I have asked the privilege of making an explanation because I am not alone in this convention. I do not represent a one man opinion. . . . I recognize, therefore, the responsibility that rests upon me when I do what I intend to do. . . I anticipated that this necessity would arise some time during the day, but I did not expect it to arise at so early an hour, and in anticipation I wrote out what I desire to submit.

.
By your resolution, adopted night before last, you, by a vote of more than four to one, pledged the country that you would nominate for the Presidency no man who represented or was obligated to Morgan, Ryan, Belmont, or any other member of the privilege-seeking, favor-hunting class. This pledge, if kept, will have more influence on the result of the election than the platform or the name of the candidate. How can that pledge be made effective? There is but one way; namely, to nominate a candidate who is under no obligation to those whom these influences directly or indirectly control. The vote of the State of New York in this convention as cast under the unit rule, does not represent the intelligence, the virtue, the Democracy or the patriotism of the ninety men who are here. It represents the will of one man--Charles F. Murphy--

³²From a description given in New York Times, June 30, 1912, as quoted in Commoner, July 19, 1912.

and he represents the influences that dominated the Republican convention at Chicago and are trying to dominate this convention. . . . Nebraska, or that portion of the delegation for which I am authorized to speak, is not willing to participate in the nomination of any man who is willing to violate the resolution adopted by this Convention, and to accept the high honor of the Presidential nomination at the hands of Mr. Murphy.

Speaking for myself and for any of the delegation who may decide to join me, I shall withhold my vote for Mr. Clark as long as New York's vote is recorded for him. . . . And the position that I take in regard to Mr. Clark, I will take in regard to any other candidate whose name is now or may be before the convention.

Now I am prepared to announce my vote, unless again interrupted. With the understanding that I shall stand ready to withdraw my vote from the one for whom I am going to cast it whenever New York casts her vote for him, I cast my vote for Nebraska's second choice, Governor Wilson.³³

Obstruction tactics were futile, for Bryan's opponents, interrupting with frequent questions and points of order, were overpowered by Bryan who was obviously master of the situation. During his speech the commotion in the hall was often so great that he could not be heard. He waited till he could get a hearing and then continued. Frenzied cheers and furious denunciations mixed as he finally concluded. The poll of the Nebraska delegation, when completed, showed that Clark received only four votes while Wilson received twelve. In spite of this change, however, the total ballot showed very little change, Wilson picking up five votes and Clark losing one and a half.³⁴

Having weathered another Bryan storm, the convention settled down, casting ballot after ballot through the long afternoon and weary evening. The immediate results of Bryan's dramatic change were negligible. Clark's strength

³³Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 232-237.

³⁴Ibid. 238; Commoner, July 5, 1912, pp. 6-7

had already reached its high tide and was slowly ebbing. Bryan's vote for Wilson was not a clear endorsement, for he said he would leave Wilson also if New York voted for him. On the fifteenth ballot Clark lost one; Wilson gained a vote and a half. Clark's downhill trend was quite clear; he lost one on the sixteenth, six on the seventeenth, ten on the eighteenth, and three on the nineteenth. Wilson, however, was not gaining because of Bryan's support. In fact by the nineteenth ballot Wilson lost five and a half.³⁵ Thus it is very clear that the only immediate effect of Bryan's change was a half an hour of heated tempers. Clark's only big loss, the ten votes on the eighteenth, was due, not to ardent followers of Bryan, but merely to the unpredictable Tennesseans, who would again be behind Clark a couple of ballots later. These losses brought Clark's total to less than a majority, which he had held for eight ballots. Apparently Clark's threat had passed.

On the twentieth ballot Clark lost twenty votes while Wilson gained thirty and a half. This first big change was due mostly to Kansas which switched its twenty votes from Clark to Wilson. Although Bryan probably had influence with this delegation, the main reason for the change was simply that two-thirds of the Kansas delegates favored Wilson and had been voting for Clark according to their instructions, till his nomination seemed impossible.³⁶

During the next six ballots cast that day Wilson's vote gradually swelled as Clark's strength dwindled. When the convention adjourned five minutes before midnight the voting stood: Clark 463½, Wilson 407½, Underwood 112½,

³⁵Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 243-255.

³⁶Ibid. 255-256; 292-298.

Harmon 29, Marshall 30, Foss 43, Bryan 1, not voting $1\frac{1}{2}$. In the fourteen ballots cast that day Clark had lost 91; Wilson had gained $51\frac{1}{2}$.³⁷ During the last ballot of the day another enthusiastic demonstration for Wilson was staged mostly by the galleries. Maryland had for the first time broken its unit vote for Clark, giving $2\frac{1}{2}$ to Wilson. The Marylanders in the galleries went wild with joy. Wilson's stock evidently was rising.³⁸

Adjournment over Sunday gave all a greatly needed rest after five hectic days of convention. The managers used the quiet Baltimore Sabbath to bargain for votes. McCombs and other leaders of the Wilson forces were enraged at Bryan for backing Wilson with the reservation that he would withdraw his support if New York voted for Wilson. McCombs also had been flirting with Murphy, hoping for the ninety "Wall Street" votes. Many feared that Bryan had eliminated Clark and would do the same to Wilson so that he could get the nomination himself.³⁹

The Sunday papers which most of the delegates read, came out solidly behind Wilson, demanding his nomination as the only way to redeem the Democratic party in the eyes of the voters.⁴⁰ As the convention re-assembled Monday morning, therefore, Wilson had strong backing and had made impressive gains, but was still behind Clark and far from a majority, with the necessary two-thirds well out of sight. He needed much more than the piddling gains he had

³⁷Ibid. 257-277.

³⁸Chicago Sunday Tribune, June 30, 1912, pt. 1, p. 1.

³⁹Link, Wilson, pp. 455-456.

⁴⁰Ibid. 458. E.g. New York World, Baltimore Sun, and New York Times.

made Saturday.

Monday's first ballot, the twenty-seventh, was the occasion for another violent outburst. John Stanchfield of New York used the opportunity of explaining his vote to slash back at Bryan, "that money-grabbing, selfish, office-seeking, favor-hunting, publicity-loving marplot from Nebraska."

Bryan, Stanchfield thundered:

has said that no candidate who has behind him the vote of the ninety men from New York can go forth from this Convention with hope or expectation of success. I desire in reply to say that the vote of New York is vital to success, and no man can go forth from this Convention stigmatized and branded with Bryanism, and come within half a million votes of carrying the State of New York.

.
Colonel Bryan never intended to support the candidate of this Convention unless that candidate should be Bryan himself. . . . We have heard for months gone by that Colonel Bryan, by his voice and influence, was supporting Woodrow Wilson in one place, that he was supporting Champ Clark in another, that he was combating Harmon here and Underwood there, all of the time desiring and intending, in pursuit of his own selfish ends, to produce a deadlock in this Convention, in order that he might be the recipient of the fruits of the controversy and the discord so engendered.⁴¹

The usual uproar followed.

When finally the twenty-seventh ballot was completed, it showed slight change, Wilson gaining one, Clark six, over the previous ballot of Saturday. The next ballot, however, gave Wilson a big increase when Boss Tom Taggart of Indiana threw twenty-nine votes to Wilson. Indiana had been casting its votes for its favorite son, Marshall. Fresh enthusiasm burst into the Wilson ranks at this significant change.⁴² The next ballot was drawn out because of a

⁴¹Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 280-283.

⁴²Ibid. 290-291; McAdoo, Crowded Years, p. 157.

dispute in the Kansas delegation. When it was completed, however, it showed no changes.⁴³ On the thirtieth ballot Wilson gained 26; Clark lost $13\frac{1}{2}$, for Iowa, which had been giving a solid 26 to Clark, now swung 14 votes to Wilson. Vermont changed its 7 votes from Foss to Wilson. For the first time Wilson had more votes than Clark.⁴⁴ Again on the thirty-first ballot Wilson made noticeable gains, picking up $15\frac{1}{2}$ votes from various delegations. After three more ballots, with practically no changes, a recess was taken till eight that evening.⁴⁵

A little spice added to these last few ballots came when some Clark enthusiasts paraded around the hall with a banner inscribed with a statement by Bryan endorsing Clark in 1910: "I have known Champ Clark for eighteen years. He is absolutely incorruptible and his life is above reproach. Never in all these years have I known him to be on but one side of the question and that was the side that represented the people." The delegates roared and the Clark men were buoyed. Fist fights broke out when the banner was placed in front of the Nebraska delegation. Bryan protested violently and tried to gain recognition to make a speech, but he could not get the floor. After the police carried the paraders away and broke up some fights, a semblance of order was obtained and the interminable balloting continued.⁴⁶

The first ballot after the recess gave Wilson the only noticeable gain

⁴³Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 291-299.

⁴⁴The vote on the thirtieth ballot stood, Clark, 455, Wilson 460, Underwood $121\frac{1}{2}$, Kern 2, Foss 30, Harmon 19, not voting $\frac{1}{2}$. Ibid. 301-302.

⁴⁵Ibid. 304-312.

⁴⁶Ibid. 309-310; Commoner, July 5, 1912, p. 10; Bryan, Memoirs, p. 184; Hibben, Pearless Leader, pp. 315-316.

he was to make during the eight tedious ballots of the evening. On that thirty-fifth ballot he received fifteen votes from the Michigan delegation, giving him 494 $\frac{1}{2}$. Although Wilson scraped together a few more votes on the next ballots, enough to put him over five hundred, when the convention adjourned after the forty-second ballot, he was down to 494. All in all it was a rather uneventful evening.⁴⁷

At noon Tuesday began the seventh day of the convention, and the monotonous task of another roll. The irrepressible Texans sent up a "rebel yell" as Connecticut transferred two votes from Clark to Wilson. Idaho gave Wilson one more. When Roger Sullivan arose among the Illinois delegates, every eye turned on him expectantly. "Eighteen for Clark, forty for Wilson," announced Boss Sullivan briskly. Thus the stampede began. Since Illinois voted as a unit, Wilson received all fifty-eight votes which Clark had held for forty-two ballots. Virginia and West Virginia swung solidly to Wilson. When the forty-third ballot was completed it showed that Wilson had 602, well over a majority but still 123 less than the necessary two-thirds.⁴⁸ Would Wilson fail as Clark had; or could he muster enough votes to put him over the top?

Wilson received twenty-seven more votes on the next ballot. On the forty-fifth Wilson could pick up only four more votes, leaving him still about ninety short of the nomination.⁴⁹ It began to seem possible that Wilson's hopes

⁴⁷Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 313-332

⁴⁸Ibid. 337-338; described in New York Daily Times, July 3, 1912, pt. 1, p. 1. The reasons for Sullivan's all-important change will be discussed in a later chapter.

⁴⁹Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 338-345

would run aground as had Clark's. The next ballot would be crucial.

As the forty-sixth ballot began John Bankhead of Alabama, Underwood's manager, hurried to the platform and made the following statement:

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the Convention, Mr. Underwood entered this contest hoping that he might secure the nomination at the hands of this Convention; but I desire to say for him that his first and greatest hope was that through this movement he might be able to eliminate and eradicate for all time any remaining vestige of sectional feeling in this country.

I think the time has come when it is demonstrated that he cannot be nominated in this Convention; and he shall not be used to defeat the nomination of any other candidate.

I withdraw his name from before the Convention, and he authorizes me to release every delegate that was elected for and instructed to vote for him, which they have so loyally done as long as his name was before the Convention. His friends are at liberty to vote for whom they please.

Wild confusion held sway. There was a mad scramble to get on the bandwagon.

Wilson would have been nominated unanimously but a few delegates demanded that their last vote be cast for "old Champ Clark." Wilson received 990 votes, thus becoming the Democratic nominee for president.⁵⁰

That evening the business of the convention was completed by the nomination of Thomas Marshall of Indiana as vice-presidential candidate, and by the adoption of a progressive platform after Bryan's own heart.⁵¹ The convention was adjourned sine die, and at long last the weary delegates could board their trains for home.

Two complicated and knotty problems remain to be considered. Why did Mr.

⁵⁰Ibid. 345-352.

⁵¹Ibid. 354-389.

Bryan push himself to the front time and again, so much so that his shadow was cast over the whole convention? Was the Nebraskan seeking his own nomination for the fourth time? Secondly, to what extent did Bryan influence Wilson's nomination? Is it true to say that "Bryan gave the word at last and Wilson was nominated;"⁵² or were there other influences as important, or perhaps more important than Bryan's? These questions will be discussed in the following chapters. If no final, clear-cut solution can be reached, it should be remembered that it is a rare man who can unravel the tangled skein of his own motivation, much less that of another.

⁵²William E. Dodd, "The Social and Economic Background of Wilson," Journal of Political Economy, XXV (March 1917), 279.

CHAPTER IV

BRYAN'S MOTIVATION

"It was and still is my judgment . . . that Mr. Bryan had not the slightest idea, when he changed the vote of Nebraska, of contributing to the nomination of Wilson. He merely desired to defeat Champ Clark, with the concealed hope and expectation of prolonging the contest and receiving the nomination himself."¹ "[T]here can be not even the shadow of a doubt that he [Bryan] not only eagerly but voraciously desired the nomination at Baltimore, which accounts for his outrageous conduct at and immediately preceding the convention."²

These and other writers contend that Bryan never intended to let the nomination go to anyone but himself. The Bryanesque maneuvers, the florid oratory, the unexpected "fireworks," all, according to these men, were part of Bryan's scheme to win for himself his fourth presidential nomination. A brief glance at the various activities of Bryan before and during the convention shows that practically every move he made was interpreted by some as an attempt to secure the nomination. Whether or not this inference is correct is

¹Carter Glass to Ray Stannard Baker, n. d., cited in Baker, Wilson, Life and Letters, III, 359, n. 1.

²Champ Clark, My Quarter Century of American Politics (New York 1920), II, 396. Clark never forgave Bryan for his change to Wilson. His memoirs, written years later, show a deep bitterness toward Bryan. Cf. Ibid. 396-397, 424.

the problem to be discussed in this chapter.

During the months before the Baltimore convention Bryan had repeatedly denied any desire for nomination. He was frequently urged to choose among the candidates so that one, with his seal of approval, could win the united backing of the progressives. He approved both Clark and Wilson, but refused to choose between them, saying they both were progressive enough for him.³ Because of this neutrality Bryan was accused of encouraging both "Wilson and Clark to run their legs off against each other." After they had eliminated each other, there would be "so many less candidates in sight and the Democratic party, wearied with a clash of personalities, may turn to the Nebraskan."⁴ Bryan's neutrality thus was interpreted as a thinly veiled attempt to have Wilson and Clark defeat each other, leaving the field clear for a sudden stampede to himself.

So also the famous fourteenth ballot. Clark had received more than a majority, due to the ninety votes of New York. Bryan announced dramatically that he refused to vote for Clark as long as Tammany's tainted votes were behind him. Bryan cast his vote for Wilson, but with a threat of removing his backing from Wilson also, if New York were to vote for him. Wilson's managers were far from pleased at this conditional support. They suspected Bryan of trying to create a deadlock with himself as the obvious compromise candidate.⁵

³Commoner, Jan. 16, 1912, p. 2; Feb. 29, p. 1; April 19, p.1; April 26, p.3.

⁴New York Daily Tribune, June 26, 1912, pt. 1, p. 6. Cf. also, William F. McCombs, Making Woodrow Wilson President (New York 1921), pp. 151-152.

⁵Baker, Wilson, Life and Letters, III, 324; New York Daily Tribune, July 1, 1912, pt. 1, p. 1.

Clark and his managers were even more sure of Bryan's secret hopes for nomination.

These are the general charges against Mr. Bryan. Besides these there are two detailed stories which would, if true, convict him of complete hypocrisy and selfishness.

First there is an interesting narrative by William F. McCombs, Wilson's floor leader at Baltimore. The episode would have taken place Saturday night, the day Bryan changed his vote to Wilson. McCombs writes in his memoir:

At this stage, Mr. Bryan was permitted among us by his speech for Wilson, although he had delivered only 18 votes. . . .

Nevertheless, about midnight Mr. Bryan's brother Charles came to my room, which was at the other end of the hall from Mr. Bryan's room, and asked if I would have a talk with Mr. Bryan. . . .

Friends who were in Mr. Bryan's room disappeared instantly. We were alone. He was standing in a corner, with his side face to me. His appearance was very grim. His mouth looked like a mouth that has been created by a slit of a razor. He was clad in a brown undershirt, baggy black trousers and a pair of carpet slippers. His hair was ruffled.

Mr. Bryan turned to me and, greeting me briskly, said: 'McCombs, you know that Wilson cannot be nominated. I know that Clark cannot be nominated. You must turn your forces to a progressive Democrat like me,' placing a forefinger vigorously on his chest.⁶

Such is the story as McCombs told it. In these few paragraphs several inaccuracies can be detected. Bryan had delivered fourteen, not eighteen votes. It is hardly possible that the interview could have been "about midnight," since the convention did not adjourn till 11:55 P.M.,⁷ leaving very little time for Bryan and McCombs to get to their hotels by midnight. Finally it is impossible that McCombs' room was "at the other end of the hall from Mr. Bryan's

⁶McCombs, p. 161-162.

⁷Proceedings of the Convention, p. 278.

room," since Bryan stayed at the Belvidere Hotel⁸ and McCombs at the Emerson Hotel.⁹ These slips, of course, do not disprove the story, but they do help one to believe Professor Link's comment on McCombs' memoir, that it is "highly colored and often inaccurate,"¹⁰ and is "the bitter memoir of a man who fell from Wilson's grace."¹¹ The most telling refutation of this supposed interview is that it would make Bryan a complete fool. If he had been planning his own nomination, why would he ever turn to McCombs to further his efforts? There were many loyal Bryanites among Wilson's supporters.¹² If Bryan had wanted someone to desert Wilson, he would scarcely have appealed to McCombs, Wilson's head manager, especially at a time when Wilson was obviously gaining votes. Just before adjournment that evening, about a half hour before this interview is said to have taken place, there was an enthusiastic demonstration for Wilson. Wilson's stock was rising. Bryan surely had more sense than to try to get McCombs to scuttle Wilson at such a time. Finally, Maurice Lyons, McCombs' secretary during the convention, denies the truth of McCombs story, saying that he was with McCombs that night.¹³

⁸Commoner, June 28, 1912, p. 2.

⁹Gregory to House, AHR, L, 769.

¹⁰Ibid. 768, n. 4.

¹¹Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917 (London, 1954), p. 292. Cf. also Morris Robert Werner, Bryan (New York, 1929), p. 199: "[I]t is a fact that when he compiled his memoirs . . . McCombs was both very ill and deeply hurt. . . . His statements about various people are obviously erroneous."

¹²E.g. Cone Johnson, Luke Lea, "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, Josephus Daniels and others.

¹³Werner, Bryan, p. 199.

A second supposed interview is narrated by William Inglis, secretary to Colonel George Harvey. Harvey, the editor of Harper's Weekly, had been the first man to advocate Wilson's nomination for the presidency, in 1906 while Wilson was at Princeton. In the years between 1906 and the 1912 convention Wilson had moved from the conservative to the very progressive wing of the party. Harvey had endorsed the conservative Wilson. In 1911 his protege, newly converted to progressivism, requested Harvey to withdraw his support, for Wilson felt that Harvey's support was alienating many of the Bryan Democrats. Posing then as the leader of the progressives, he found Harvey's backing embarrassing. In a very courteous but clear manner he requested Harvey to be less outspoken in his support. Harvey, convinced that his conservative client had moved too far to the left, determined to destroy Wilson politically by making public what he portrayed as Wilson's black ingratitude. In this entire episode "Harvey stands convicted of utter and complete hypocrisy."¹⁴ These few remarks introduce Colonel Harvey and explain his relation to Wilson.

In 1916 Inglis, Harvey's secretary, wrote a series of articles for Collier's Weekly on Harvey's part in bringing Wilson to the White House. In discussing the Baltimore convention Inglis narrates the following fascinating story, supposed to have taken place on July 2, the day Wilson was nominated.

We [Colonel Harvey and Inglis] had finished breakfast and were walking from the elevator to our rooms when we saw knocking on the door a man who was a stranger to me and, I think, at that time, to the colonel. He introduced himself as Charles P. [sic] Bryan, brother of William Jennings, and I stepped into the room,

¹⁴Link, Wilson, p. 365. The facts pertaining to the Harvey-Wilson break are given, Ibid, 359-378.

leaving the two conversing. After a few minutes the colonel came in and told me to remain there as he was going upstairs to see Mr. Bryan. Half an hour later he returned, and, as he entered the room, did the unusual thing of locking the door. . . . Then, breaking the silence with a laugh, the colonel said:

'Bryan certainly is a wonder. His rooms were full of people, so he took me into his bathroom and we have been there ever since, each with a foot on the side of the tub. Do you know what he wants to do? He wants to adjourn the convention for thirty days. He has heard, and he is right, that Sullivan is going over to Wilson on the next ballot. That means Wilson's nomination, if it happens. The only way to head it off is by adjourning for a month or so as soon as the convention meets. Bryan said he could not make the proposition himself without queering himself with the whole country, but he told me that if the suggestion should come from either the Clark or the Underwood people he would support it. He expects me to convey that information to whichever side I consider most available.'

'But,' I queried, 'will they do it?'

'They would, undoubtedly. Postponement is the only possible chance for either of them. Now, understand, I said they would. I also say they won't, for the simple reason that not a living soul except yourself is going to know that Bryan would support the proposition. He is convinced in the back of his head that I have a grudge against Wilson and want him defeated. Consequently he has no doubt that I will give the tip. I did not say that I would or that I wouldn't; but, of course, I shall do nothing of the kind.'¹⁵

If Inglis' story is true, it obviously would convince anyone that Bryan's part at Baltimore was not played for altruistic motives. Implicit in the incident is Bryan's determination to defeat Wilson, leaving the field clear for his own nomination.

An unexpected confirmation of this incident comes from Bryan's own pen. Writing in his newsletter a few days previous to this episode, Bryan said, "If a national convention could assemble and do its work and then take a recess for a month and allow the final action to be taken after the delegates had

¹⁵William O. Inglis, "Helping to Make a President," Collier's Weekly, LVIII (October 21, 1916), p. 24.

returned from a visit home, our conventions would come much nearer representing the people." But he is quick to add, "I would not advise that, however, in the present case, for fear some of the delegates might not be able to get back."¹⁶ This shows that Bryan had at least thought of adjourning the convention, although he is speaking in the abstract, and not making a suggestion he thought could be carried out.

It should also be mentioned that Professor Link, probably the best authority on Wilson's nomination and election, accepts Inglis' articles as an important source of information. Discussing the various contemporary memoirs, Link says they contributed very little to his story of Wilson's election. "Two exceptions to the generalization about memoirs should be made, however, and heavily underscored," Mr. Link observes. "The second exception is William C. Inglis's account of Wilson's relations with George Harvey, 1906-1912. So important is this memoir that without it many things that would otherwise be inexplicable are made clear."¹⁷ Coming from such an eminent scholar this endorsement would seem to settle the credibility of Inglis' articles. Perhaps, however, it can be suggested that Mr. Link is referring only to the first two articles in the series of three articles. For, though he must have read the third article, he either disregards or contradicts several important interpretations given there by Inglis. He uses material from the earlier articles to explain the relations of Wilson with Harvey and the part Harvey played in nominating Wilson for the governorship of New Jersey.

¹⁶Bryan, Tale of Conve., p. 169, the newsletter for June 28.

¹⁷Link, Wilson, xi.

The third article treats of Wilson's break with Harvey and of Harvey's part at Baltimore. Professor Link definitely does not follow Inglis' interpretation of the Wilson-Harvey estrangement. Inglis makes the old charges of ingratitude, which Link refutes. Nowhere does Mr. Link mention the part supposedly played at Baltimore by Colonel Harvey. It is at least doubtful, therefore, whether Mr. Link's authority can be used to confirm the credibility of this Bryan-Harvey interview.

Several strong arguments can be given for disbelieving Mr. Inglis' account of this supposed interview. In the first place, why should Bryan solicit Harvey to further his machinations to adjourn the convention for a month? Bryan regarded Harvey as a minion of Wall Street. He had rejoiced when Wilson broke with Harvey, since it showed that Wilson was free of Wall Street control.¹⁸ If Bryan ever seriously thought of trying to adjourn the convention, a move which would most probably have shattered the Democratic party worse than Roosevelt had the Republican party, he would surely have found some way other than turning to a leader of the conservatives. Whether Harvey's influence, or even Bryan's, could have adjourned the convention is more than doubtful. If adjournment could save the chances of Clark and Underwood, it seems strange their managers never suggested adjournment. Furthermore, Bryan's influence with the Clark forces by this time was very weak and it had never been strong among Underwood's managers.

Secondly, the three articles by Inglis are quite clearly campaign propaganda printed just a few weeks before Wilson's second election in 1916. Inglis

¹⁸Ibid. 373; Werner, pp. 169-170; Hibben, Pearless Leader, p. 305.

depicts Wilson as an ingrate and an autocrat.¹⁹ The editor of Collier's repeats the charge with emphasis:

He [Harvey] had done his appointed task and would no more think of demanding credit for discovering President Wilson than of blaming his candidate for shaking him off coldly and bluntly. Each acted according to his nature. It is the nature of some to give humbly and others to take without thanks. No matter how Mr. Inglis might feel, it is certain that Colonel Harvey long ago ceased pondering on the ingratitude of the great.²⁰

Finally, it is apparent that Inglis is trying to make Harvey the man chiefly responsible for Wilson's nomination. Throughout the section dealing with the Baltimore convention Inglis makes it clear that big-hearted Colonel Harvey has forgotten the rude ingratitude of Wilson and is willing to come to the rescue when Wilson needs help, as in the case of Bryan's plot to adjourn the convention. This picture of Colonel Harvey is simply false. The day after the convention adjourned the Times portrayed Harvey in a very different light.

[E]verybody in Baltimore is joyous that the interminable convention is over.

The only discordant note in this love-feast of harmony is Col. George Harvey, editor of Harper's Weekly. Mr. Harvey is far from pleased with the nomination of the New Jersey Governor, and he apparently doesn't care who knows it. As soon as the nomination of the Governor was assured, Mr. Harvey retreated to his hotel and surrounded himself with a thick atmosphere of gloom.

'Will you make any comment on the result?' the Colonel was asked.

'I do not know any reason why I should,' he snapped. 'I am not a public man.'²¹

Perhaps this refutation of the McCombs and the Harvey interviews with Bryan is not fully convincing. If, however, it can be shown that everything

¹⁹Inglis, Collier's, LVIII (Oct. 21), 14, 15, 20, 21.

²⁰Editorial, Collier's Weekly, LVIII (October 12, 1916), 16-17.

²¹New York Daily Times, July 3, 1912, pt. 1, p. 3.

Bryan did at Baltimore is explicable on the thesis that he did not want the nomination, there is little reason to doubt his sincerity, or to accept the accusations of McCombs and Inglis. The rest of this chapter will take up this more positive interpretation of Bryan's actions.

After his defeat in 1908 Bryan announced that he would not be a candidate in 1912. This position was not changed, even when it became evident that there would be a rift in the Republican party, enhancing Democratic chances.²² It is well to remember that after his defeat in 1900 Bryan had announced that he would not run in 1904, and he kept his word even though it meant that the conservatives could nominate their man, Alton Parker.²³ There seems to be little reason for doubting Bryan in 1912. Of course his neutrality between Wilson and Clark is claimed as proof of his intention to defeat both, but Bryan did not choose between them simply because he believed both were progressives. He wanted to make sure that progressive delegates would control the convention, making the nomination of a conservative impossible. If Bryan had wanted the nomination it would have been easier to say so and fight it out at the primaries with Clark and Wilson. He probably could have beaten Clark in most states, and Wilson in a few. If Bryan had chosen between Wilson and Clark the two would still have fought each other. In a three-corner fight with either Harmon or Underwood, Wilson and Clark together might have won a

²²Bryan, Memoirs, p. 158; Commoner, January 19, p. 3; March 8, p. 3, 1912. The last citation quotes Bryan as saying, "I am satisfied I am not the strongest man, and I will go out and fight for a progressive democrat as sincerely and as earnestly as ever I fought for myself, and I hope more successfully."

²³Bryan, Memoirs, pp. 145-146.

majority in a state, but the conservative, Harmon or Underwood, would have won more delegates because of the fight between the progressives. This is clearly what Bryan feared. This is why he said he would support the stronger of the two in any state where a reactionary could profit by the fight between them. On one thing Bryan insisted, that the party go progressive in 1912.²⁴

The Baltimore convention opened with the fight over the temporary chairmanship. It is hard to see how Bryan's intransigent stand could have bettered his chances for the nomination. It is so much simpler to explain his fight as he did, as an effort to block the conservatives, thus guaranteeing that the convention would open with progressives in control. His thoughts about earlier conventions, and about the Republican convention he had just attended, as well as his suspicions about the national committee because of the Guffey affair, have already been discussed.²⁵ These thoughts surely provide adequate motivation for his stand against Parker. His supposed craving for the nomination would most likely have been expressed in some other way than by opening the convention with an all-out battle.

But even supposing that Bryan intended his fight against Parker as a curtain-raiser in his battle for the nomination, once he had been defeated by Parker it must have been clear that this was not his year. "His reasoning powers told him that a convention which refused to give the temporary chairmanship to a man who had been three times the standard bearer of the party

²⁴Commoner, March 29, p. 1; April 19, p. 1; 1912.

²⁵Cf. Ch. II, pp. 16-19, above.

was not likely to nominate that man for President."²⁶

Bryan's next move in the convention, the anti-Ryan-Belmont resolution, could in no way have been motivated by a desire to run again. Surely Bryan must have realized that if he wanted the nomination he would need some friends in the convention. This resolution which he proposed against the advice of his most loyal followers was not the kind of move that wins political friends.²⁷

Bryan's dramatic change to Wilson on the fourteenth ballot has been used to prove his presidential aspirations. Nothing had happened in the voting, however, to give Bryan the idea that he was more popular than he had been four days before when Parker defeated him for the temporary chairmanship. Furthermore, he must have realized that by voting against Clark he would alienate most of his supporters, for Clark was backed by the Western states, traditionally strong for Bryan.

Mr. Bryan told his wife during the convention, "There is only one condition under which I could take this nomination, and that would be if the deadlock becomes so fixed that no one is able to break it, and they turn to me as

²⁶Dunn, Harrison to Harding, II, 187; cf. also New York Daily Times, June 26, 1912, pt. 1, p. 4; New York Daily Tribune, June 26, pt. 1, p. 1; Chicago Daily News, June 27, pt. 1, p. 1. These three newspapers all have similar statements, e.g. the Chicago News says, "Bryan has admitted to his friends that if he ever had a chance to be nominated in this convention that chance is gone."

²⁷The anti-Ryan resolution was taken by some as a threat that Bryan would bolt the party unless a progressive were nominated. There was talk of a Bryan-LaFollette or even a Bryan-Roosevelt ticket. The whole question is highly doubtful. If Bryan supported Parker in 1904 there is little reason to believe he would have bolted in 1912. Cf. The Commoner, July 19, 1912, p. 12; The Chicago Daily News, June 26, pt. 1, p. 1; Dunn, II, 188.

one upon whom the different factions can unite. This condition is not probable."²⁸ During the convention Bryan had in mind a single principle, the necessity of nominating a progressive.²⁹ When we recall Bryan's crusade for two decades against the conservatives in the party, and that Roosevelt was threatening to form a new party precisely because neither the Republicans nor Democrats were progressive enough, all of Bryan's actions become meaningful. Bryan was a reformer trying to ensure the nomination of a reform-candidate. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find any sense in Bryan's actions if they are to be explained as steps toward his nomination. Undoubtedly the possibility of winning the nomination often ran through his mind, but this does not mean that it was his main driving force.

This chapter can be concluded with a tribute to Bryan's sincerity and honesty. Only on the premise of the meanest type of duplicity can anyone claim he sought the nomination. Such was not his character. A man who knew him well, although he disagreed with Bryan on many issues, wrote:

It has become the custom nowadays, among the supercilious people, to depict Bryan as a clown, or a fool, or a mountebank. He was nothing of the kind. In many respects he was one of the shrewdest men I have ever known. In him, unsophistication and sagacity were strangely blended. Along with this he was truthful and square. His friendships were sincere; one could depend

²⁸Bryan, Memoirs, p. 335, Cf. also a letter of Mrs. Bryan to Colonel House near the end of July, 1912, cited in Werner, p. 202; "Will said all the time he did not think it was his time, and when we found the way things were set up we were sure of it."

²⁹Cf. Bryan, Statement to the press, published July 3, 1912, quoted in Tale of Convs., p. 206: "The paramount question before this convention was whether we would take sides with the reactionaries, thus encouraging the organization of a third party and giving to this third party the hope of defeating the reactionaries divided." Cf. also Ibid. 200-202.

implicitly on his word. Yet, at the same time, he was a clever politician--the best strategist of his generation. Moreover, he was an exceptionally able man, and a fighter. He knew when to hit hard, and he never failed to do it when the occasion required hard hitting.³⁰

Unless this portrait of Bryan as a truthful, sincere politician is completely erroneous, Bryan cannot be accused of seeking nomination at Baltimore.

Such questions of motivation, of course, can seldom be solved with certainty. Bryan himself must have found it difficult at times to unravel and sort out his own motives. The facts however, at least those we know to be true, lead to the conclusion that Bryan's main-spring of action at Baltimore was simply a determination to keep the party progressive.

³⁰McAdoo, Crowded Years, p. 336-337; cf. also Josephus Daniels, "Wilson and Bryan," Saturday Evening Post, CXCVIII (September 5, 1925), p. 54; "No two men ever lived who were more unlike in form, in temperament, in method, than Mr. Wilson and Mr. Bryan. . . . But whatever their agreements and differences, I know that each entertained privately the same high respect for the other's honesty, sincerity and ability to which both gave public expression. Both were above dissembling. Each was the soul of sincerity." It is worth mentioning that both Daniels and McAdoo were with Bryan in Wilson's first cabinet, and thus had an opportunity to know him well.

CHAPTER V

BRYAN'S INFLUENCE

One comment frequently repeated about the Baltimore convention of 1912 is that Wilson owed his nomination to Bryan. It is stated by a great number of authors, contemporary and recent, seldom with even a qualifying doubt. For instance: "To William Jennings Bryan, Woodrow Wilson owed his nomination as everybody knows. . . . Finally the tide turned when Bryan made clear for whom he stood and threw his votes to Wilson."¹ "When he [Bryan] finally threw his tremendous influence to Wilson, the struggle was over. Indiana jumped to Wilson, then Illinois, and the fight was won."² "Bryan's bolt from Champ Clark to Woodrow Wilson climaxed a convention full of the sensational. This transfer of allegiance certainly nominated Wilson for the presidency."³ Similar statements could easily be multiplied.⁴

¹Oswald Garrison Villard, Fighting Years, Memoirs of a Liberal Editor (New York, 1939), pp. 228-230.

²Joseph P. Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson As I Know Him (Garden City, New York, 1921), p. 122.

³Estal E. Sparlin, "Bryan and the 1912 Democratic Convention," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXII (March 1936), 537.

⁴E.g. Fred E. Haynes, Third Party Movements Since the Civil War (Iowa City, Iowa, 1916) p. 431; Nye, Progressive Politics, p. 289; Wayne C. Williams, William Jennings Bryan--A Study in Political Vindication (New York, 1923) pp. 120-122; John Cuthbert Long, Bryan, The Great Commoner (New York, 1928), pp. 246-268. Mr. Link cites eight other authors who make similar statements. (Wilson, p. 463).

After reading such cocksure statements it is quite interesting to look into the facts. Certainly Bryan's thundering speech on the fourteenth ballot had no immediate, telling effect on the balloting. One look at the votes following Bryan's sudden change to Wilson shows that for the next five ballots Wilson stayed practically the same, gaining only a vote and a half, but by the nineteenth ballot, dropping three below where he had been on the fourteenth. It is true that Clark lost about twenty votes in these five ballots, but they went to Underwood. It seems, then, quite an oversimplification to say, "Bryan gave the word at last and Wilson was nominated."⁵ Nor is it true that Bryan defeated Clark. Clark's crucial ballots were the eleventh and twelfth. By the fourteenth it was already becoming obvious that the convention did not intend to swing to Clark.

There is a more subtle explanation of Bryan's influence. In this version Bryan made clear the issue, Wall Street versus the people. His speeches all ring with denunciations of the forces of "the interests." It became clearer with every day of the convention that Clark's managers were compromising with the Wall Street Democrats, while Wilson stood firm, refusing to straddle. All over the country newspapers began to cry out in favor of Wilson, the only true progressive. "The folks back home," in Bryan's quaint phrase, made themselves heard, sending thousands of telegrams to the delegates at Baltimore to repudiate Clark. The whole country seemed to see the issue as Bryan did, and demanded Wilson's nomination. The pressure these "folks back home" put on the delegates forced them gradually to swing to Wilson. Thus

⁵Dodd, Journ. of Pol. Economy, XIV, 279.

Bryan is said to have nominated Wilson by letting loose the flow of public opinion, an indirect, but none the less decisive, role.⁶

One could hardly deny that Bryan roused public opinion during the convention, and this opinion must have been a key factor in deciding many delegates to change to Wilson. The question, however, is whether Bryan, through public opinion was the decisive factor at Baltimore. If one thing is clear after a careful study of the balloting, it is that other actors besides Bryan played an absolutely essential role in Wilson's nomination. A brief review of the balloting will bring out this point.

On the fourteenth ballot when Bryan abandoned Clark, Wilson had 361 votes, Clark, 553. As has been mentioned the next five ballots showed no significant change, Wilson falling to 358 on the nineteenth, Clark to 532. On the twentieth ballot Kansas gave Wilson its twenty votes and Idaho its six. After this Wilson's gains were slow but steady for the rest of the day. Perhaps these changes were due to Bryan's action during the fourteenth ballot. These delegates obviously had other considerations, however, since they waited five or more ballots to follow Bryan's lead. Probably the reason the various states did not follow Bryan immediately was that they still preferred "old Champ Clark" to Wilson. They wanted to vote for him till his nomination seemed impossible. It is at least possible, however, that Bryan's influence helped bring Wilson the 51½ votes he gained between the fourteenth and the twenty-

⁶Bryan, Tale of Convs. pp. xxvii-xxviii. Baker, Wilson, Life and Letters, III, 337, 359-360. Gregory to House, AHR, L, 771-773. Frank Parker Stockbridge, "How Woodrow Wilson Won His Nomination," Current History, XI (July 1924), 572; Commoner, July 12, 1912, pp. 2, 3; July 19, p. 3; July 26, p. 7; Daniels, Sat. Ev. Post, CXCVIII (Sept. 25), 52.

sixth ballots of Saturday.⁷

By adjournment that Saturday night Wilson had crept up to 407½ while Clark still held the lead with 463½. The delegates did not reconvene till Monday, having all day Sunday to read the papers and telegrams demanding Wilson's election. Monday's balloting gave Wilson about a hundred more votes. On the fourth ballot Tuesday he was nominated. But it is grossly inaccurate to say that as soon as "the folks back home" spoke up, the delegates jumped to Wilson. Other factors entered.

The first noticeable change on Monday came on the second ballot when Boss Tom Taggart startled the convention by delivering to Wilson twenty-nine of Indiana's votes. There is little likelihood that Bryan's influence, either in the convention or through public opinion, moved Mr. Taggart. It seems more probable that Taggart had made a good bargain, trading his state's votes for the vice-presidency, which was later given to his protege, Thomas Riley Marshall of Indiana.⁸

Two ballots later Wilson took the lead for the first time when Iowa swung fourteen votes from Clark to Wilson, while Vermont contributed eight. On the next ballot nine states gave Wilson votes, but they totaled only fifteen and a half. Other gains on Monday were few and small, except for the fifteen votes Michigan donated to Wilson's cause. The most that could be attributed to Bryan

⁷Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 241-278.

⁸At least if McCombs can be believed in his memoir, Taggart made this trade. (Making Wilson Pres. p. 177). Link accepts the story, (Wilson, pp. 462-463).

⁹Ibid. 311; 457.

are fifty or so votes that Wilson received Monday. This estimate represents a maximum. Added to the fifty votes of Saturday it sets Bryan's total contribution to Wilson's nomination at one hundred. It is highly improbable that all of these one hundred votes were due to Bryan; even if they were, they did not give Wilson even close to a majority, much less the necessary two-thirds.¹⁰

Bryan, therefore, beyond any doubt played an important role in advancing Wilson's nomination. On Saturday his speech changing his vote, though it did not have the immediate decisive effect so often spoken of, did probably prompt several Western states to follow along by voting for Wilson. By Monday "the folks back home" had started to demand a change to Wilson. Bryan undoubtedly stirred up much of this public opinion by making vivid the issue of the convention, and making it just as clear that Wilson was the only trustworthy progressive.¹¹ Wilson, however, was not nominated on Monday. He had to win about two hundred and twenty-five more votes, far more than he had gained in forty-two ballots. On Tuesday, in four ballots Wilson was made the candidate. Was this swift, decisive landslide also due to Bryan? Here is the crucial question in studying Bryan's influence.

¹⁰ Professor Link limits Bryan's influence to forty and one-half votes from Nebraska, Iowa, Colorado, Idaho, and Montana. This does not include the 20 votes from Kansas, 3 from Arizona, 2 from Oregon, 2 from Wisconsin, and 6 from Wyoming, all of which states were most likely in some way swayed by Bryan. Nor does it include 15 from Michigan, 9 from Massachusetts, 5 from Ohio, 3 from Louisiana, 2 from New Hampshire, 5 from Maryland, and 3 from Pennsylvania, and other votes, which possibly were led to vote for Wilson because of Bryan's action in the convention or because of the public opinion he aroused. Mr. Link seems to overlook Bryan's indirect influence through public opinion. Link's comments can be found Ibid. 464.

¹¹ It should be remembered that Bryan never during the convention gave his unqualified backing to Wilson. He threatened to abandon Wilson as he had Clark, if Wilson received New York's ninety votes.

Tuesday's stampede was largely determined by two men, Roger Sullivan of Illinois and Senator John H. Bankhead of Alabama. Sullivan was the leader of the Illinois delegation, which started the swing to Wilson on the forty-third ballot. Bankhead, Underwood's floor leader, occasioned the final landslide by withdrawing Underwood's name on the forty-sixth. These two men turned the tide to Wilson. Their aid was absolutely necessary, and when it came was decisive. Did they back Wilson because of Bryan's change twenty-some ballots before? Or was it the public opinion, stirred up by Bryan, which drew them into the Wilson camp? Or could there be some other reason?

Roger Sullivan kept his personal preferences of the candidates to himself. His wife and son, however, liked Wilson, and during the convention had pleaded his case with Roger.¹² Boss Sullivan was a practical politician and was probably swayed by more concrete considerations. He must have remembered that he owed whatever power he had in the convention to the aid given by the Wilson men. He had won the contest for seating his Chicago delegation, defeating the Hearst-Harrison delegation, because of the support he got from the Wilson forces.¹³ Sullivan did not forget friends; he also knew that if Clark got to the White House, any favors granted to Illinois politicians would go to friends of William Randolph Hearst and the mayor of Chicago, Carter Harrison,

¹²McAdoo, Crowded Years, pp. 157-158; Tumulty, pp. 98-100; Daniels, Sat. Ev. Post. CXCVIII (Sept. 5), 48; Chicago Daily Tribune, July 3, 1912, pt. 1, p. 3.

¹³The story of this clever bargaining by Luke Lea, a Wilson manager, was told above, Ch. III, p. 39, note 8. One of Wilson's managers seems to indicate that this "deal" helped much in bringing Sullivan to vote for Wilson. Cf. Gregory to House, AHR, L, 774.

Sullivan's arch-enemies. Sullivan may have reasoned that the possibility of a favor from Wilson was better than the certainty of nothing from Clark.¹⁴ Furthermore, Sullivan still feared Bryan. There was always the chance that Bryan might stampede the stalemated convention. Better to let Wilson win than risk another Bryan nomination.¹⁵ Finally, the delegates from Illinois wanted to vote for Wilson. By Monday two-thirds of these fifty-eight delegates favored Wilson, perhaps because they had been "hearing from home," receiving telegrams demanding Wilson's nomination.¹⁶ Probably it was with great reluctance, however, that Boss Sullivan gave Illinois votes to Wilson, who recently, as governor, had crushed the boss-ridden political machine of New Jersey.

At least a partial explanation of Sullivan's change to Wilson can be found in these comments. Whether or not they were the only considerations entering the picture, it seems clear that Bryan's influence did not move Sullivan to vote for Wilson, unless it was fear that Bryan might win the nomination. Public opinion perhaps was a factor Sullivan considered, but not the only factor. Bryan most probably was not Sullivan's only consideration.

Besides Illinois' 58 votes Wilson received $14\frac{1}{2}$ more votes from Virginia and 16 from West Virginia on the forty-third ballot. Here again it probably

¹⁴Link, Wilson, p. 459.

¹⁵Ibid; Hibben, Pearless Leader, p. 317; New York Daily Times; July 2, 1912, pt. 1, p. 1; One Pennsylvania delegate is supposed to have expressed this idea quite delicately, "You'll take Wilson, or we'll jam Bryan down your throat." (McCombs, p. 124.)

¹⁶Chicago Daily Tribune, July 1, 1912, pt. 1, p. 2.

took more than Bryan to bring these two states within the Wilson fold.¹⁷

On the next ballot, the forty-fourth, Wilson received 629 votes. He could scrape together only four more on the following ballot. With all the support he had already received it was still possible that his nomination could be blocked. He needed a hundred more votes. It was highly improbable that he could chip enough votes off the adamant block of three hundred loyal Clark men. Without the hundred votes Underwood had received for forty-five ballots, Wilson could not be nominated.

Underwood and his supporters at Baltimore represented conservative democracy opposed to progressivism of the Bryan stamp. Underwood had come into the presidential campaign largely because of the bitter attacks Bryan had made on him and his tariff views. Bryan could hardly have inspired Bankhead's move on the forty-sixth ballot. Bankhead resented Bryanism as much as Underwood.¹⁸

Underwood, moreover, was not a stalking-horse for Wilson, or for anyone else. Underwood's managers were convinced that their candidate could win the nomination as a compromise candidate when Clark and Wilson deadlocked. Bankhead was willing to co-operate with the Wilson managers to defeat Clark

¹⁷Link, Wilson, p. 460.

¹⁸Cf. Chicago Sunday Tribune, June 23, 1912, pt. 1, p. 8, where Bankhead comments on Bryan's note to the various progressive candidates, urging them to join him in opposing Parker's nomination as temporary chairman; "Senator Bankhead of Alabama, manager for Underwood's campaign, said he was pleased that Bryan had not sent his note to the floor leader of the house, [Underwood] as he doubtless would have received a sharp answer." The Bryan-Underwood dispute of 1911-1912 is treated in Link, "Underwood Movement," Journ. of South. Hist. XI, especially 231-234, 240-241.

on the tenth and following ballots. Clark was not nominated because of this Wilson-Underwood coalition. Wilson's managers had persuaded Bankhead to form with them a solid anti-Clark block, thereby enabling them both to weather the surge of Clark power when New York gave its ninety votes to Clark. In return Bankhead received a promise that Wilson's votes would go to Underwood if Wilson were "put out of the race at any stage of the game."¹⁹ On the forty-sixth ballot Bankhead must have realized that by holding out just a few more ballots Wilson might well have been eliminated from the race. In many ways Underwood's chances seemed brighter on that ballot than ever before.

In spite of this, when Alabama was called at the start of the forty-sixth ballot, Bankhead released the Underwood delegates, assuring Wilson's nomination. "Mr. Underwood entered this contest hoping that he might secure the nomination," Bankhead announced. "[B]ut I desire to say for him that his first and greatest hope was that . . . he might be able to eliminate . . . for all time any remaining vestige of sectional feeling in this country." "I think the time has come," he continued, "when it is demonstrated that he cannot be nominated in this Convention; and he shall not be used to defeat the nomination of any other candidate."²⁰

What prompted this move by Bankhead? A clear indication is given in his statement. He hoped, in the first place, "to eliminate . . . any remaining vestige of sectional feeling." Wilson was, after all, a Southerner as much as Underwood. Wilson was therefore the second choice of the Underwood delegates.

¹⁹Link, Wilson, pp. 450-451

²⁰The Proceedings of the Convention, pp. 345-346.

When they decided their candidate could not win, they asked to vote for Wilson.

Bankhead also said Underwood did not wish his candidacy to be used "to defeat the nomination of any other candidate." Behind this statement is a very interesting story. Up to the very end the Underwood leaders thought their candidate could win. One newspaper narrates:

Illinois had promised to swing to Underwood during the afternoon. New York held out similar promises, the plan being that Mr. Underwood would have a 'try-out' after Wilson had polled approximately six hundred votes with lessened prospects of additional spurts, but with the probabilities of slow gains. At the end of the forty-fifth ballot Senator Bankhead and other Underwood managers demanded a 'show-down' from the Sullivan contingent.

'You have been promising to come to us today. Are you coming on this ballot?' was the question asked Roger Sullivan and his cohorts.

The Underwood men were told that Illinois proposed to go back to Champ Clark. . . .

'Oscar Underwood is not going to be used as a catspaw to defeat any man for the nomination or to further deadlock this convention,' the Illinois delegation was told.²¹

If the Illinois delegation had swung back to Clark, it would have put new life in the Clark forces, and would probably have defeated Wilson. Bankhead withdrew Underwood because he saw that without acquiring the big vote of some Northern state like Illinois, Underwood could not be nominated. Bankhead must have realized too, that the other Southern candidate, Wilson, would also be defeated. Hence he withdrew Underwood's name, stating that he "shall not be used to defeat the nomination of any other candidate."

Bryan's part in this final stage of the balloting was practically nil. Surely his personal influence did not determine Bankhead to remove Underwood

²¹New York Daily Tribune, July 3, 1912, pt. 1, p. 3. This incident is also referred to in Link, Wilson, p. 461, from other sources.

from the race. Pro-Wilson public opinion, stimulated by Bryan, may have entered into Bankhead's thinking, but since this was mostly a clamor for a progressive, it must have had little effect on the conservative Underwood leaders.

It is therefore a drastic oversimplification to say that "Bryan gave the word at last and Wilson was nominated." To say that Bryan created an issue, arousing public opinion for Wilson, is true, but it does not give an adequate explanation of Wilson's nomination. In the first place, public opinion cannot by any means be attributed simply to Bryan. Others also saw the issues as he did, and were even more outspoken in Wilson's support. But all the newspaper comment and all the telegrams demanding Wilson's nomination, even if Bryan could be credited with inspiring them, did not nominate Wilson. Agents outside the sphere of Bryan's influence, were absolutely necessary for Wilson's nomination. This is especially true of the three big politicians who advanced Wilson's cause, Taggart, Sullivan, and Bankhead. All three wielded large blocks of votes, thirty from Indiana, fifty-eight from Illinois, and ninety-seven from the four Underwood states. Without the aid of these three men Wilson would not have been nominated.

Another telling factor was the devoted work of men like McCombs, Palmer, McAdoo, Lea, Williams, and many others. The part played at Baltimore by these Wilson managers is often overlooked. Their system of organization was excellent, and their parliamentary skill undoubtedly played a key role in nominating Wilson. The fact that very few of the votes which came to Wilson were later changed to some other candidate, is one indication of their careful

organization.²²

Bryan's most loyal supporters, furthermore, were from the Western states, most of them supporting Clark. Bryan's activities at Baltimore had all in some way been attacks on Clark. Bryan therefore alienated many of his faithful backers of former years, thus greatly curtailing his influence.

It must be said in conclusion, however, that Bryan's shadow was cast over the entire convention. He was the biggest man at Baltimore. To many in 1912 William Jennings Bryan was a giant among his fellow men, a Paul Bunyan, ripping up trees and snapping them with a flick of the wrist. This explains why so many people saw only Bryan at Baltimore, overlooking those actors who played just as important a role. He was a big man, who spoke fearlessly and fought hard for what he considered the right. If it is true to say that there were other factors without which Wilson would not have been nominated, it is probably just as true to say that without Bryan and his influence, Wilson would not have received the nomination. The clear-cut issues Bryan made, the public opinion he stimulated, the enthusiasm for Wilson he encouraged - all of these went far to bring about the nomination of Woodrow Wilson. Beyond doubt Wilson owed a great debt to William Jennings Bryan.

²²Gregory to House, AHR, 1, 771-772.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Henry Joseph Bourguignon, S. J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

January 10, 1957
Date

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Signature of Adviser